



# Fifth estate



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The election is already over and we have lost. The name of the president for the next four years won't be announced until November 3, but I know right now that the guy who won is a white male millionaire from Yale who is drunk on arrogant feelings of self entitlement and privilege.

The asshole who has already won this election is a statist insider who has conspired with his colleagues to kill and rob more people around the world in the name of American exceptionalism. He's pro-war (even worse, pro-"War on Terrorism" & pro-Iraqi invasion), pro-PATRIOT act, pro-No Child Left Behind, and pro-Israeli free-for-all militarism.

I'm not saying that Bush & Kerry are the same. They may echo each other an awful lot, but there are some little differences-Kerry's moderate Catholicism vs. Bush's apocalyptic Christian Zionism, his anti-globalization position against outsourcing, his (somewhat vague) support for reproductive choice. I don't hate Kerry (yet), whereas I've been irrationally & venomously opposed to the Bush-Cheney crew since they all had their first jobs under Reagan. Bush is a unilateral capitalist warmonger; Kerry is a multilateral one. But basically I feel like I'm in a hospital being asked if I want my left arm amputated or my right one.

A cute Kerry kid said to me in all seriousness: "I believe that this may be the most important election of my life." Maybe he's right... maybe it could make all the difference in the world to block Bush from four more years of power. But, goddammit, what does it mean that the most important election in a LIFETIME is a choice between Bush & Kerry?? Doesn't that say something about how rotten this whole thing is? A couple of weeks ago, the Bush people were taking the public temperature with rumors about fatherland security "suspending" election if "actionable intelligence" revealed that terrorists were planning an attack. A lot of people were outraged—"man, if that happens, people will go crazy. There'll be rioting in the streets. We're not gonna take that!"

If it is true that this is THE most important election of our lifetime, then I think that it is even MORE important for us to stubbornly, dogmatically, and unequivocally maintain the anti-voting position. If not now, then when? —Don LaCoss

Whoever wins, we lose. Stolen from the trailer for the sci-fi thriller *Alien vs. Predator*, this could be our slogan for the election season. When we first heard the slogan "Anybody but Bush," some of us were tempted to offer an unabashed endorsement. No one with half a heart or mind misunderstood the idea that Bush was so bad, so dangerous, and so vile that we'd do just about anything to send him back to Texas.

The word was on the street: "I'd vote for my dog." "I'd put my broken toaster-oven in the White House before I'd elect that guy again." We'd opt for anybody. So would we draw straws at

the local soup kitchen? Open the phone book, dial randomly, and choose any American couch potato?

Unfortunately, we didn't get just anybody. We got John Kerry.

Though "Bush-Satan" and "Bush-Orwell" bumperstickers offer visceral appeal and comic relief, sad truth is Bush vs. Kerry might as well be "Bush-Kerry." Although ostensibly polar opposites, these comrades from *Skull and Bones* are mere reflections of one another. Kerry is just as much a lying, corrupt, opportunistic, war-monger, though unlike Bush, he is adept at couching his language to sedate the liberal base. (Bush knows his base, too, and uses rhetoric to pump his troops full of proto-fascistic patriotism and grotesque evangelism). For the ethically and ideologically anti-war, we cannot suffer Dubya's militaristic millen-arianism or Kerry's internationalist interventionism.

It's clear the united, anti-Bush front has fashioned a vast and visionary cultural arsenal to crush W. From fringe to mainstream, the Anybody But team is amped for action. With his bumbling incumbency matched only by his fanatic certitude, the policies of a second Bush regime promise such unprecedented terror, ratcheted-up fear, and institutionalized poverty for the entire planet that we cannot assume the posture of arrogant privilege that "it doesn't matter" who wins. It does. Is it possible that both camps are correct? Those who contend we must vote and the doctrinaire abstainers?

Yet Anybody But Bush is not enough. Sure, some of us will gladly suffer the momentary humiliation of casting a ballot as a frantic tactic, fraught with remorse. But we cannot call this act of self-defense a strategy

or breathe more than a single sigh of relief on November 3. The amazing proliferation of songs, films, websites, and comedy routines of the anti-Bush moment is enough in itself without the implication that all this great art should lead us to the ballot box (punkvoter.com talks about over coming the "apathy and anarchy" of young people). We know the empire survives this season, no matter who is in the White House to lead "us." As some Australian anarchists admonish us, it's time to think outside the ballot box.

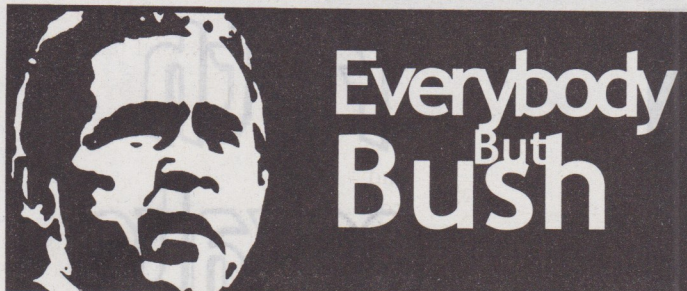
Whoever wins, we lose. Yes, but one loss will hurt more than the other. What about this: whoever wins, let the revolution begin. Whoever wins, we might remember what Italian ultra-leftist Jacques Camatte wrote more than thirty years ago: "We are faced today with the following alternatives: either there is actual revolution or there is destruction of the human species." This choice has confronted the global citizen for a generation and the circumstances that require this to be true have only multiplied. But there's another part that Camatte talks about, which is more difficult for us to understand: we need to become revolutionaries.

In the belly of imperial privilege, we need more than desperate pleas and manipulative pandering to wake the popular



tagged stop sign, Dowlstown, TN





anger held at bay by pop culture delusions, chronic overwork, collective denial, and epidemic depression. While the fragile ecology that keeps the planet livable hangs in the balance, the character armor of mass society is cracking everywhere.

We need people who can see through the pathetic platforms of party politics to forge a new and inclusive politics of desire, fearlessly taking the keys from the dry-drunk driver pummeling the whole planet over the abyss in an SUV without brakes and giving everything away to everybody for free. Enough with bargains, negotiations, and injunctions; let's end injustice without petition, request, or demand.

Enough of "Anybody But Bush"; we need everybody.

—Sunfrog

I intend to vote for the Democratic candidate for president in the November election. Or, rather, I will participate in a national referendum that asks, will you affirm the policies of the white man's war party, the party of rage and fear, of misogyny and homophobia, of class war against the poor, of racism and the destruction of the environment? Will you vote for a party led by an evil moron who says a god speaks through him and who surrounds himself with religious psychos, appoints bigots and extremists as judges, fights endless wars, and brings back the possibility of nuclear conflict?

A yes vote in this referendum will be a disaster.

If it was solely a matter of replacing one slightly better stooge of big capital with that of a lesser one as in previous electoral contests, it wouldn't occur to me to enter a voting booth. But there is much more at stake this time. One need only go to a web site like thousandreasons.org to realize that the current political criminals in office represent a major divergence from the usual deadly policies and culture of the American empire.

Everything the left says about Kerry is true, as is everything we say about elections. Ralph Nader has said that between the two capitalist party candidates he would prefer the Democrat only because he would slightly "slow the deterioration." Not much of an endorsement, but these small differences between the parties can be matters of life and death for millions of people and the planet.

Clinton and Gore, contrary to liberal mythology, were terrible and committed enough crimes against people and the planet to justify being dragged before the World Court, but their tenure was the ordinary functioning of the empire as will be Kerry's. However, Bush's electoral coup in 2000 hastened in an extraordinary worsening of conditions in every aspect of life both at home and abroad.

An example of the "small" differences between Bush and a Kerry presidency can be seen when Bush sent a delegate to the July international AIDS conference in Bangkok for the express purpose of stopping the availability of generic anti-retroviral drugs at the behest of the large pharmaceutical companies. This one act alone may condemn millions with HIV to death.

Another example is a former mining industry lobbyist, now in charge of the federal agency regulating mine safety, implementing a regulation that would allow coal companies to generate more dust during the extraction process meaning more workers in the pits will contract black lung disease. These are just two examples of Bush crimes from an endless list.

Many anarchists and usually third party voting leftists admit that it does matter who wins. So, if it matters, why is anyone hesitating about turning out these current devils to put in at least a lesser order of demons?

One FE collective member said she thought voting would be a "humiliation" even if it is warranted given what a surrender of anarchist principles such an act entails. However, isn't it a conceit bordering on arrogance born of class and race privilege for us to be unwilling to accept a little humiliation if that's what it takes to get the boot off the world's throat if even slightly?

Still, this is a particularly difficult conclusion to come to especially after writing an anti-voting essay for our Spring edition and having penned virtually every other such statement in this paper over the last thirty years. The real problem is the degree to which electoralism has been elevated and direct action diminished. I made up my mind about this question after returning from an anti-war demonstration in suburban Detroit where only about 75 stalwarts attended in a metropolitan area of three million. So, in part, it is out of desperation and despair that I am reduced to voting for a candidate who won't kill everything so fast.

Why is debate about mine health standards, for one instance, being taken up by people at the polls, rather than the workers in this hideous industry calling a general strike, using the militancy of their compatriots in Ecuador as an example? Why isn't an army of mothers leading huge marches to protest Bush's revocation of mercury standards, hence, endangering their kids? Or, in a thousand other areas where we are under assault?

Missing huge movements of contestation, I don't think I could stand in front of an AIDS-infected mother from Burundi and explain to her why my anarchist principles prevent me from voting against a man who wants to deny her medicine that could save her life. At worst, I know voting is a capitulation; at best, a Kerry administration will be a stopgap measure, some breathing space for those suffering the most, allowing the real work of creating uprisings everywhere against the rulers to proceed.

Also, once all the arguments are in, the final one for me is, it'll be a pleasure to wipe the smirk off the chimp's face\*

\*With apologies, of course, to our simian cousins for the comparison.

—Walker Lane

**Note:** We at the FE collective make no explicit suggestion about what our readers should or should not do Nov. 2.



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# Fifth estate

**#366 FALL 2004**



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Compiled by john johnson

## Sherman Is Out, But Not Free

Anarchist organizer Sherman Austin has been released from prison after serving most of a one year sentence after being framed for controversial content on his website Raise the Fist.com. He faces three years of federal probation under terms which are a continuing attempt to silence him from exercising his right to organize with anarchist groups. Sherman will be intensely monitored to the extent that every phone, computer or other digital device he comes in contact with will be under strict supervision by his probation officers. For updates on Sherman, check [freesherman.org](http://freesherman.org).

## Greeks Deporting Undesirables and Poisoning Dogs

Last-ditch efforts to "clean up" Athens before the Olympic games began included removing thousands of immigrants, beggars, drug addicts and homeless people from the capital's streets. Human rights activists said vulnerable people, including asylum seekers from war-torn countries such as Iraq, were falling victim to the campaign. Underlining the concern, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees urged the Greek government to ensure that "international standards" were not being breached. The agency's unusual intervention followed reports in the Greek media that mass deportations had soared in advance of the games.

Thousands of stray dogs have been poisoned despite a campaign by animal welfare activists to arrange for shelters and adoption. The Greek government is concerned with its public image as a "modern" and "civilized" nation. In the countdown to the games, about 70,000 police and military personnel have been drafted to patrol the city.

## Feds Harass Activists in the Midwest

In late July, anarchists in Kansas City, Lawrence, and Topeka, Kan, Kirksville and Columbia, Mo., Denver, and St. Louis were contacted directly, or through relatives, co-workers, neighbors, and friends by the FBI inquiring about protests at the Democratic and Republican National Conventions, as well as the Presidential Debates, and the election.

Several anarchists in the region were served with a federal grand jury subpoena. The grand jury has historically been used to divide and terrorize dissidents. There is an urgent need for legal defense funds and lawyers with federal grand jury experience. The state has raised the stakes to stifle dissent. Activists in the Midwest vow to fight the repression and keep up their political work.

Send Legal Funds to: Kansas Mutual Aid c/o ARISE P.O. Box 442438  
Lawrence, KS 66044,  
[kansasmutualaid@hotmail.com](mailto:kansasmutualaid@hotmail.com),  
[kcdirectaction.net](http://kcdirectaction.net).

## Labor Notes...

The Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) are lending support to efforts of workers trying to form unions at Wild Oats health food stores. Wild Oats recently sold its Norwalk, Conn. store after a successful union drive. The chain recently fired an IWW member in Norwood, Ohio for organizing activity. Call Wild Oats Customer Service at 1-800-494-WILD and demand they

reinstate the fired worker and accept unionization.

Starbucks workers in New York City successfully organized a union with the IWW and were poised to become the first Starbucks Baristas' union locally certified in the country. Workers at the Midtown Manhattan coffee shop came together to raise wages and to achieve respect and dignity on the job. However, two days before the union certification election, George W. Bush's Labor Board intervened on behalf of the company effectively destroying the right to a fair vote. Workers are fighting to win their demands without government certification but this attack on workers' rights must not go answered. See [starbucksunion.org](http://starbucksunion.org) for details.

## Anti-Imperialist Out of Prison

In early August, Raymond Luc Levasseur, now 57, was released from federal prison in Atlanta. He returned to his native Maine, where he will live in a halfway house through November and remain on probation for years to come. Levasseur, a working class Vietnam Vet, was a member of the United Freedom Front, dubbed the "Ohio Seven," a group responsible for 19 bombings and 10 bank robberies over a nine-year period that began in the 1970s. These actions were carried out in solidarity with various anti-imperialist struggles across the globe. Arrested in the 1980s, Levasseur has spent the past 20 years in custody for his role in the actions. Portland Police Chief Michael Chitwood described Ray Luc Levasseur as "truly a revolutionary," and said they didn't want him in the city.

Sources: various emails, websites, mainstream and alternative press, including [infoshop.org](http://infoshop.org) and [indymedia.org](http://indymedia.org)

Send us your stories, reports, and suggestions.



## Meet the New Boss

When US occupation authorities pretended to return sovereignty to Iraq, they erected a pliable government of quisling-proxies. To cover up the devastating failure of the invasion, they created a mirage of Iraqi independence.

During a secret ceremony in a heavily-militarized bunker buried somewhere in the Green Zone, there were no Iraqis present other than the new puppets; only Western news media, US military officers, and armed mercenary bodyguards were allowed to attend.

After this insincere diplomatic protocol, proconsul Paul Bremer quickly boarded an airplane and bolted out of Baghdad like someone working the old dine-and-dash restaurant scam. Shortly thereafter, former contra mastermind John Negroponte arrived to take up the post of US "ambassador" to Iraq, a job whose duties he will surely perform with the same relish he had as an "ambassador" during the worst of the Reagan-Bush secret wars in Central America.

The new prime minister of Iraq is Iyad Allawi, a wealthy British neurologist who used to be a loyal member of the Ba'ath Party's inner circle and a trusted aide of Saddam Hussein. Allawi has been described by his US government backers a "democratically-minded strongman," a term that we used to hear in reference to Ngo Dinh Diem, the aristocratic, nepotistic Catholic despot who ran the South Vietnamese police state before the Kennedy Administration terminated his employment and put a contract out on him. Like Diem, Allawi's limited credibility soon evaporated when he publicly endorsed US military assaults against civilian populations.

Anxious to declare martial law, Allawi has locked down the media with censors and propagandists formerly employed by Saddam's Ministry of Information. He has organized secret police security agencies staffed with ex-Ba'athist "specialists" and reinstated the death penalty against insurgents. In mid-June, Allawi personally executed six unarmed, blindfolded, and handcuffed prisoners in a Baghdad police station. He has ordered police raids against "criminal elements" in the slums of Baghdad and blames the violence and chaos besetting the city on the hardened criminals that Saddam Hussein released from jail just prior to the invasion. Allawi believes, as all statist do, that packing prison cells will bring peace, happiness and prosperity to the nation.

## A State-of-the-Art Failed State

Once again, the history of the Vietnam War is informative to what has happened in Iraq: the June 28 "transfer of power" called to mind those days in 1969 when Nixon vowed to "Vietnamize" the US war in Southeast Asia, to turn everything over to their South Vietnamese partners so that the US could fully extract itself from the conflict (to see how well that worked, check your history books). By pledging to "sovereignize" Iraq, the US is trying the same stunt. And there are other precedents offering an instructional template for the disaster of Occupied Iraq. Consider the so-called autonomy given to provinces in western Tibet by Communist China in 1965 following the awful military intervention of 1959, or, better yet, the example of East Germany.

In the mid-1950s, following nearly a decade of military, political, and economic occupation, the Soviet Union granted

# SOVEREIGNTY & the STATE

## Not Another Iraq Editorial!

sovereignty to the German Democratic Republic (East Germany). No one was naïve enough to be fooled by that one either. Iraq is just as assuredly a US satellite and will remain part of its hegemonic bloc until the US collapses as the USSR did starting in 1989. In the case of East Germany and Iraq, those involved overlooked a crucial set of facts: sovereignty cannot be "given" or "handed over," only asserted, established and maintained.

US Secretary of State Colin Powell laid out this situation with clarity when he explained to a reporter that "some of that sovereignty" that the US is handing over to Iraq is going to be given back; "they are going to allow us to exercise [it] on their behalf," he said with a straight face.

Would Allawi's Saddam-without-the-moustache dictatorship keep the lid on the insurrections until mid-November, at which time the invaders could go back to being more obvious about acting as a military occupation force? The sovereignty scheme was supposed to take the heat off of Bush and Cheney as they wheedled, lied, and fear-mongered their way across the US this summer and fall.

If any problems did arise in Iraq in the meantime, the press would be directed to speak with representatives of Allawi's government, not Bush's. US troops were ordered to stay off of the streets, button down their bases, and avoid firefights to keep casualty figures from mounting. As Negroponte lurks behind the stage curtains in Saddam's palace in the Green Zone and refuses to give interviews, US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, once the object of a war-celebrity cult arising from his constant appearances in network news coverage, has been muzzled and ordered back into the shadows for the time being.

As part of this sleazy sleight of hand, other news stories are hyped, like the dire need for a Constitutionalized "defense" of marriage and the creeping dread of Code Orange terrorist warnings. If enough heat can be generated by these dead-end topics, they will appear on the front page and at the top of the broadcast, thereby pushing what little critical coverage there is of the Iraq debacle even further to the margins of public consciousness. Literally, the lead story the other night on a local news broadcast was the centenary anniversary of the invention of the banana-split sundae.

In our opinion, there is no such thing as a "legitimate" government, and there is certainly nothing "fake" about the cruel implementation of state sovereignty going on these days in Iraq. There can be no authentic, meaningful, autonomous sovereignty in Iraq so long as there is a state of any kind there. But that does not mean that we support the rise of patriarchal, reactionary tribal councils stepping in to fill the void left by imploding national identities.



The only kinds of "legitimate" Iraqi sovereignty that we recognize are things like the illegal wildcat strikes by petroleum workers' councils in Basra; the continuing self-organization of the unemployed throughout the country into mutual aid unions; the networks of informal protection and resources set up by neighborhood women for themselves and their children; and efforts initiated by Kurdish anarchists to derail the bloody locomotive of nationalism in northern Iraq with ideas of internationalist solidarity.

### *The Return of the Repressed*

Here at *Fifth Estate* refuse to partake in the Big Forgetting currently underway. FE has published collective editorial statements against the war in Iraq in every issue since Fall 2002. Granted, these tracts have been a cluttered mix of research, analyses, predictions, descriptions, calls to action and, to be sure, a few spittle-flecked rants.

Yet regardless of their rhetorical tone, these collective statements are meant to keep the issues surrounding the invasion of Iraq in the forefront, to try to keep readers grounded in the struggle against the war and the scoundrels and sociopaths who planned it and profit from it. In the name of freedom, we urge all to remember the abominations of this war despite the blizzard of distractions, fatigue, fright, and feelings of powerlessness.

The war in Iraq continues, and it continues to matter. In the

last few months, though, we've noticed some anarchist comrades and compañeros sneering at stubborn antiwar positions like ours. Since antiwar sentiment in America is so widespread, it must be mild in its tone and reformist in its goal, they reason.

The typical grumble is that the Iraq War is a fait accompli and a movement against it diverts energies better served elsewhere. Certainly, we recognize that the war has forced us to spend too much energy and time fighting against it both in the pages of FE and out in the streets. While our sacrifices are ridiculously small when compared to the bone-crushing miseries of others, we still resent that this war is stealing resources from us that we'd rather put to use in our own locales or for our lovers, our siblings, and our children. We all would rather be working on positive, proactive projects in our own communities—hell, for that matter, we'd rather be sipping more iced tea, reading more poetry, skinny-dipping in more abandoned quarries, tending to more of our tomatoes, and sleeping late with more of our friends. But we cannot.

We must stay involved in antiwar, anti-occupation, and anti-imperialist struggles, keep the war from being eclipsed by the postured electioneering of presidential campaigns, and radically sharpen the struggle to the concerns of anarchists, anti-statists, and anti-authoritarians. These perspectives need to be reclaimed and reinforced, not swept under the rug.

As always, against all wars and all states,

The FIFTH ESTATE COLLECTIVE

## send us your ideas & images for FE 367 "Economy & Community"

As we go to print, the US Ministry of Fatherland Security has just raised its color-coded freakout level to ORANGE, citing "credible and specific" terrorist threats against "financial institutions in New York, New Jersey and Washington DC." Sure, we all hate capitalism, but what is it, exactly, that inspires people to load a truck with dynamite and drive it into the lobby of a stock exchange? Would desperate terrorists plot for four years to blow up a community-supported agricultural farm, a free store, a mutual-aid labor exchange center, or a file-sharing website?

Contribute your thoughts, experiences, investment tips and artwork on the theme of "Economy & Community" for the next issue of *Fifth Estate*. Possible topics might include: neo-feudalism, the corporate State, loan sharks, flea markets, black markets, shoplifting, private-property cargo cults, bartering, gifting, gambling, community currency, collective income-sharing, anti-consumerism, credit debt, counterfeiting, Five-Year Plans, Tobin Tax, ethical banking, drug-dealing, telemarketing crank calls, war profiteering, stealing *The Wall Street Journal*, jobless recoveries or recovering joblessness.

**Artists: please contact us! DEADLINE for PROPOSALS: October 1**  
**DEADLINE for FIRST DRAFTS: October 15**

email: [fifthestate@pumpkinhollow.net](mailto:fifthestate@pumpkinhollow.net)

USPS mail: Fifth Estate PO Box 6 Liberty, TN 37095



# A day without protest:



photo by Hillary Lister

## sober reflections on the G8 protests and the global resistance

The 30<sup>th</sup> annual G8 summit meeting of the major industrial nations was held this June on Sea Island, Georgia within a day's drive of the Fifth Estate's southern headquarters, so some FE collective members traveled to participate in the planned protests and counter-summit.

Approximately 300 resisters assembled in Brunswick, Georgia—the closest the demonstrators were allowed to the royal elite—to greet some of the 30,000 military and police personnel stationed throughout the region.

### Not Another Miami

This was not a mass gathering. The planned marches, organized under the auspices of United for Peace and Justice, attracted no more people than local antiwar events in a medium-sized city. This was not another Miami. The anarchist scene was represented in the streets by a small black bloc and by a temporary collective called Fix Shit Up.

The tentative analyses of the anarchist presence at the convergence that I've read pursue a common thesis, detailing some problems with the black bloc and celebrating the accomplishments of the neighborhood improvement action known as Fix Shit Up. From posted reports at places like Infoshop.org and A-Infos, a consensus begins to emerge, praising Fix Shit Up and belittling the black bloc.

Taking its name from the phrase "fuck shit up," Fix Shit Up was an ambitious endeavor schemed up by SEANET (the South East Anarchist Network) to practice solidarity and create bonds with the local Brunswick community during the summit and to counter negative anti-anarchist propaganda in the media.

### Fix Shit Up: Charity or Solidarity?

A model for the devastating impact of environmental racism, Brunswick, Georgia is not a pretty place. The community includes the Gullah-Geechee people; since the 1950s, they have been evicted from their island homes by greedy developers and forced to abandon

their ceremonial, hunting, and fishing sites. On the mainland today, their lives are riddled by disease, poverty, and pollution. That anarchists were more interested in "adopting a real anti-oppression analysis" by creating a context of solidarity with this community than fighting the police is obviously an important thing.

Here's an excerpt from one report: "[T]he G8 Fix Shit Up crew [...] are building solutions with their own hands [...] as they make a commitment to complete repairs on old houses for the impoverished in Brunswick."

Another report described the Fix Shit Up project as "a model of communal functioning, of individuals throwing in for the greater good of all, within and outside of the group. In stark contrast to the divisive actions of my friends in the Brunswick black bloc, and in spite of the youth of the organizers, the Fix Shit Up action was a model of anarchist political maturity."

In practice, Fix Shit Up accomplished much: run-down houses were cleaned and repaired, anarchists worked extensively with the local African-American community, and a long-standing stereotype of the violent anarchist was subverted. In the words of one participant, it was "anarchy in action." It may be premature, however, to use this action to announce a paradigm shift for the anarchist movement, away from direct action toward community improvement.

By no means disparaging the general spirit of solidarity that motivated Fix Shit Up, beyond vague notions of mutual aid and despite the best intentions of the participants, Fix Shit Up fundamentally appears as an isolated gesture. But perhaps, Fix Shit Up points to a future for anarchists of balancing heroics in the streets with helping others in the neighborhoods.

What would long-term solidarity look like? To move past symbolism and partial social amelioration requires a full-time commitment to anti-racism, community justice, and radical solidarity work. Like Food Not Bombs, Fix Shit Up borders on merely promoting anarchist ideology by "doing good works" in the same manner the Salvation Army promotes religion.



But as anarchists, we *do* need to repair our reputation. And I'm not talking about the media reputation. Why should African-Americans in places like Brunswick trust us? There are many reasons not to. Fix Shit Up was clearly about developing some of that trust. To move from liberal charity to revolutionary solidarity, from symbolic one-time gestures to long-lasting mutual aid, *this* requires more self-critical depth and more time than was shared by good-hearted anarchists for a few days in June. One of my traveling companions on the journey asked:

"What has happened in Brunswick since the anarchists and other G-8 protesters left? I haven't a clue. Why not? Because it is on to the next event, the next party, or the next protest."

Fix Shit Up rightly extended the focus away from the media freak show to capitalism's permanent cruelty. The governor of Georgia may have declared "a state of emergency" for a month surrounding the summit, but for the poor and oppressed in south Georgia and the global south, daily life is a permanent state of emergency.

## Nameless Prisoners

Meanwhile, members of the black bloc undertook the riskiest action of the week. At the Thursday, June 10 protest, billed as a Palestinian Solidarity event, the black bloc embarked on a nine mile breakaway march in the blazing Georgia heat. With the stated intention of reaching the island where the global goons were meeting, the anarchists and their media escorts marched onward until they were finally stopped by the police and 15 were arrested. Some of the activists spent close to two weeks in jail, practiced jail solidarity, refused to give names, and were on a hunger strike for most of that time. Their statements from jail were eloquent and succinct. It's appealing to imagine what this action might have been had 3,000 or 30,000 instead of 300 shown up.

## Strategic Thinking or Strategic Retreat?

**R**eally, the whole, the response of American radicals, revolutionaries, and global justice activists to the G8 summit in Georgia looked to me like retreat and defeat. But we probably could have seen it coming. If the victories of Seattle and Cancun were defined by the resisters' abilities to reach out to the general public while effectively disrupting the business of the WTO, most convergences against global capital should honestly be described as losses.

Earlier this year, I endorsed the call put out by "G8 Resistance." The message then was clear: "This is not a call to follow the bosses to their next summit," it admonished. The writers obviously thought of Miami as they reminded, "We have been corralled, beaten, arrested and shot at in the locations of their choosing." Instead of being predictably trapped at a counter-summit, we would be everywhere. We would be refusing every aspect of alienation in a transcontinental festival of transformation!

It sounded so good. But when June arrived, other than some small, token gestures, amazing and spirited solidarity demos failed to materialize.

Decentralization sounds like a strategic plan, but as another activist who went to Georgia put it, "I have yet to hear of any autonomous actions actually taking place, and I am not surprised. What tried to sound like strategic thinking, begins to appear as a

strategic retreat."

But this is only one piece in a much larger puzzle of the context that created the failure to mount any serious resistance to the G8. In the anarchist milieu (noting nevertheless that anarchists were very visible and present among the small numbers in Georgia), there appears to be a growing and palpable suspicion of old-school, oppositional activism in general and what's now known as "summit-hopping" in particular.

Doesn't summit-hopping encourage the stereotype that anarchists are nothing more than middle-class tourists? Don't these mass gatherings simply give the authorities every opportunity to experiment with crowd control and the latest non-lethal, high-tech, anti-riot devices?

As each summit accelerates the spectacle of disempowered non-participation, the rulers ratify real domination and accentuate the futility of resistance. The *real* revolution must be elsewhere. But elsewhere may be too elusive, to the point of being nowhere.

Why did so many activists stay home? For at least one revolutionary I know, it was a conscious decision not to show up; since so many cops were coming to a veritable "pigapalooza," why not give them nobody to intimidate and incarcerate.

Why wasn't Brunswick like "the Miami model"? One person who went to both Miami and Brunswick offered a discerning but sober discussion of the police presence and tactics at both places: "Based on my experience and perception (and I wasn't everywhere) the actual oppression by the police in Brunswick was small. The police activity that I saw had more the appearance of intimidation than of brutal attack. In short, this wasn't the Miami model, which was an attack. Brunswick, I fear, was the beginning of the occupation, the dawn of the police state as business-as-usual."

While some people regularly scoff at the idea of America becoming a police state, among Native and African-Americans, among the poor and imprisoned, this notion has never seemed strange. Now, in the days of the Patriot Act and Homeland Security, critics from the liberal middle class have at least entertained the frightening notion that the Bush cabal is carrying us towards fascism.

**F**or now, whatever the ideological limits of "activism" and "protest-as-usual," we still need to show up, to act. Every time elitist cliques and statist scoundrels gather, people need to oppose them. They are the thugs who have declared the endless war of the few against the many, and they are winning. We still need educational campaigns and mass mobilizations, even with all their symbolic and reformist shortcomings.

I'm not suggesting we unequivocally choose the "mass movement" model for organizing and action, but rather, that we not prematurely abandon the prospect of mass action as both precursor and adjunct to more radical approaches. In fact, an untimely day without protest—even and especially protest as counter-spectacle—could be the day when our hope for revolution will die.

—Doug Graves



## Art as Terror? Professor busted by feds

**C**ritical Art Ensemble (CAE) is a collective of artists and academics who illustrate problems with science and technology through writing, performance, and installations. Their objective is to demystify high-tech tools so that the public can make informed decisions about the new technologies that are already impacting our lives in many ways.

For his work with the Critical Art Ensemble, SUNY Buffalo art professor Steven Kurtz was charged by a grand jury with mail fraud, wire fraud and improperly obtaining biological materials. Dr. Robert Ferrell, distinguished Professor of Genetics at the University of Pittsburgh, was also charged in the case.

Originally, the defendants were charged with bioterrorism on the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force's search warrants and

subpoenas through the expanded police powers provided by the USA-PATRIOT Act. Others subpoenaed to appear in the case included four professors and Jim Fleming of Autonomedia Press, which publishes CAE books.

This bizarre case began on May 11 when Hope Kurtz died in her sleep of cardiac arrest. Her husband Steve called 911, but emergency personnel became suspicious of Kurtz's art supplies and called the FBI. Within hours, FBI agents in yellow hazmat suits had illegally detained Kurtz as a suspected bioterrorist, cordoned off the entire block around his house, and impounded his dead wife's body and his cat.

For about a decade, the Critical Art Ensemble has used scientific processes as performance art in order to investigate the links between science and politics. Part of the CAE's objective is to demystify science and make the issues surrounding the political control of science more accessible to the broader public; "Free Range Grains," the CAE's latest project, includes a mobile DNA extraction laboratory for testing food products for the presence of genetically-modified organisms which are not listed on the products' labels to underscore the fact that US consumers are part of an immense unregulated experiment being conducted by corporations. At the time of the FBI raid, Kurtz was researching biological warfare and bioterrorism to assess the actual danger these weapons pose and to question US government policy on such threats, including topics such as the draining of public monies into bioweapons research and defense and the subsequent militarization of the US public health system.

You might expect CAE to take a stand against biotech, but they don't join either side of the debate. Instead, they adopt the position that it is the public's enforced ignorance of science which allows the current debate about biotech to be so shallow.

On the pro-biotech side, we hear arguments based on what CAE calls a "rhetoric of Edenic promise," which claims that biotech will inaugurate a new era characterized by abundant food and perfect health for all. On the anti-biotech side, CAE says that arguments tend to be based on irrational fears that have their origins in ancient Judeo-Christian taboos. CAE suggests that the public cannot be expected to advocate for itself effectively when both sides rely on superstitions to advance their agendas, which in the case of the pro-biotech faction, may include the return of a fascist eugenics.

Two of the organisms found in Kurtz's house—*Bacillus globigii* and *Serratia marcescens*—are common and generally harmless to humans, so much so that they can be obtained via

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**This case is of interest to anyone concerned with issues of free speech, artistic expression, dissent, censorship, and the growing spiral of uncurbed police powers. It should also serve as a warning about the increase in political surveillance in the last four years.**

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mail order from scientific supply companies that sell to middle schools and high schools. None of the bacteria appear on the bio-hazard master lists used by law enforcement agencies

throughout the US; nonetheless, the FBI confiscated the samples, computers, periodicals, books, writings, papers, correspondence, videotapes and art projects from the men as part of their "anti-terrorist" investigation and refuses to return them.

This case is of interest to anyone concerned with issues of free speech, artistic expression, dissent, censorship, and the growing spiral of uncurbed police powers. It should also serve as a warning about the increase in political surveillance in the last four years—that the EMTs sent to Kurtz's home snatched to the cops should be a reminder to all about the Justice Department's plan to recruit delivery drivers, postal workers, and home-repair workers as police informers.

Kurtz's arrest is also indicative of how much science has been politically manipulated by the US government to align with the views of material reality espoused by ecocidal industrial capitalists and obscurantist religious fundamentalists.

They believe in creationism but dismiss global warming as "junk science"; they ignore the untested effects of genetic tampering with the food supply and institute women's health initiatives consisting of wacky theological gynecology that prescribes prayer for menstrual cramps and "proof" that abortions cause breast cancer. The same people who brought you increased amounts of arsenic in drinking water, more mercury in the air, faith-based AIDS treatment, ridiculously lax mad cow disease testing in the beef industry, and new definitions about what qualifies as a nuclear power plant accident are deciding that an activist artist is a bioterrorist. —Doug Graves & John Brinker For more information and to offer help: <http://www.caedefensefund.org>



## ANARCHISTS IN BOSTON PROTEST DNC

Famously liberal Boston turned totalitarian at the end of July, complete with: newly installed surveillance cameras, random baggage searches and i.d. checks on public transportation, thousands of out-of-town police (including military police) in full riot gear, circling helicopters, F-14 overflights, and a 1,000-person capacity "free speech" protest pen a block from the convention center, constructed of razor wire, chain link fence, and overhead netting. These new toys and structures were created under the guise of "homeland security," with the stated purpose of protecting Bostonians and convention delegates from likely terrorists and violent protesters, who would supposedly be out in force targeting the Democratic National Convention (DNC). This process ended up initiating a permanent surveillance program.

Inside the convention center, 4,000 delegates, 15,000 members of the media, and unknown numbers of corporate backers gathered (with the help of over \$45 million in taxpayer dollars) in a shell almost entirely insulated from anything other than the "official" Convention reality.

The DNC also took some interesting actions in light of its platform statement to support "independent media" in the "Arab and Muslim world." While Fox News had multiple, large skybox banners, Al-Jazeera, the Middle East's first independent satellite news organization (which provided significantly more coverage of the Convention than did most American networks), had their DNC-approved banner removed by the DNC without explanation.

Perhaps none of these actions should come as a surprise, however, from a party whose leaders are promoting the intent to increase funding and resources to fight the "War on Terror," which it states "is not a clash of civilizations. It is a clash of civilization against chaos." The official motto of the event was "Stronger at Home; Respected in the World".

As part of this continuing war, the platform contains promises to: add 40,000 GIs; double the anti-terrorism special units; expand NATO forces in Afghanistan; affirm a commitment to supporting Israel, "our only true ally in the Middle East;" and "end the Castro regime as soon as possible," while offering no similar calls for action against dictatorships in other countries.

Meanwhile, outside the convention center, thousands gath-

ered for open forums, fairs, demonstrations, and small actions. Over 5,000 people attended the Boston Social Forum, the first in the US, part of the World Social Forum process which originated in 2001 in Brazil. Another one- to three thousand came out in the streets for an anti-war march the following Sunday.

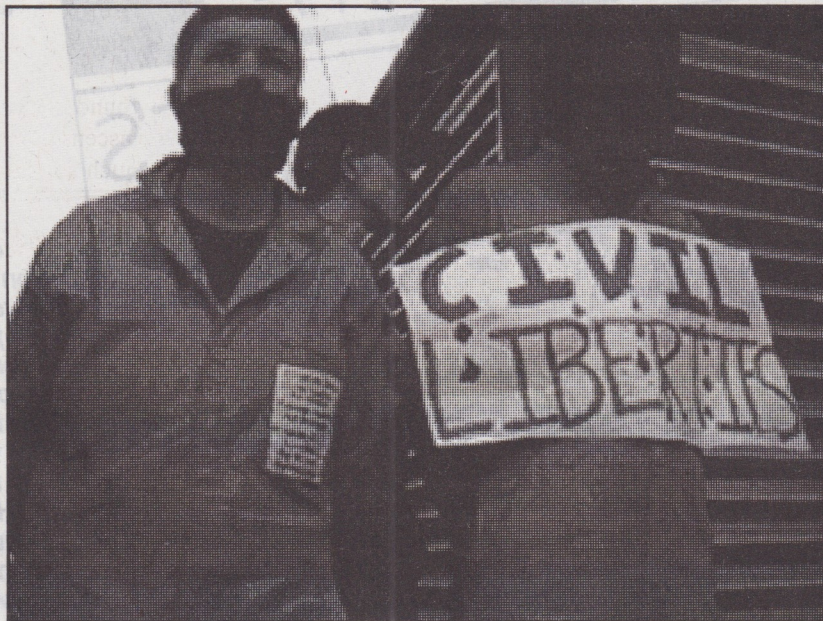
The "free speech pen," mostly boycotted by demonstrators, was a target of street theater. The Bl(a)ck Tea Society, an ad hoc coalition of different organizations (with the majority being some flavor of anarchist) set up a convergence center, the "Really, Really Democratic Bazaar," and put out a call for decentralized actions.

The Bazaar drew an estimated 2,500 people of all ages (and numerous cops and agents) to the Boston Commons for free music, performances, teach-ins, kid activities, bio-diesel demonstrations, and free food. The decentralized actions were much smaller, ranging from a Critical Mass bike ride and a queer kiss-in, to smaller marches and a pirate party. At the latter event, three were arrested (half of the total number over the course

of the whole week), one for holding a plastic toy pirate hook that the police claimed looked like a Molotov cocktail.

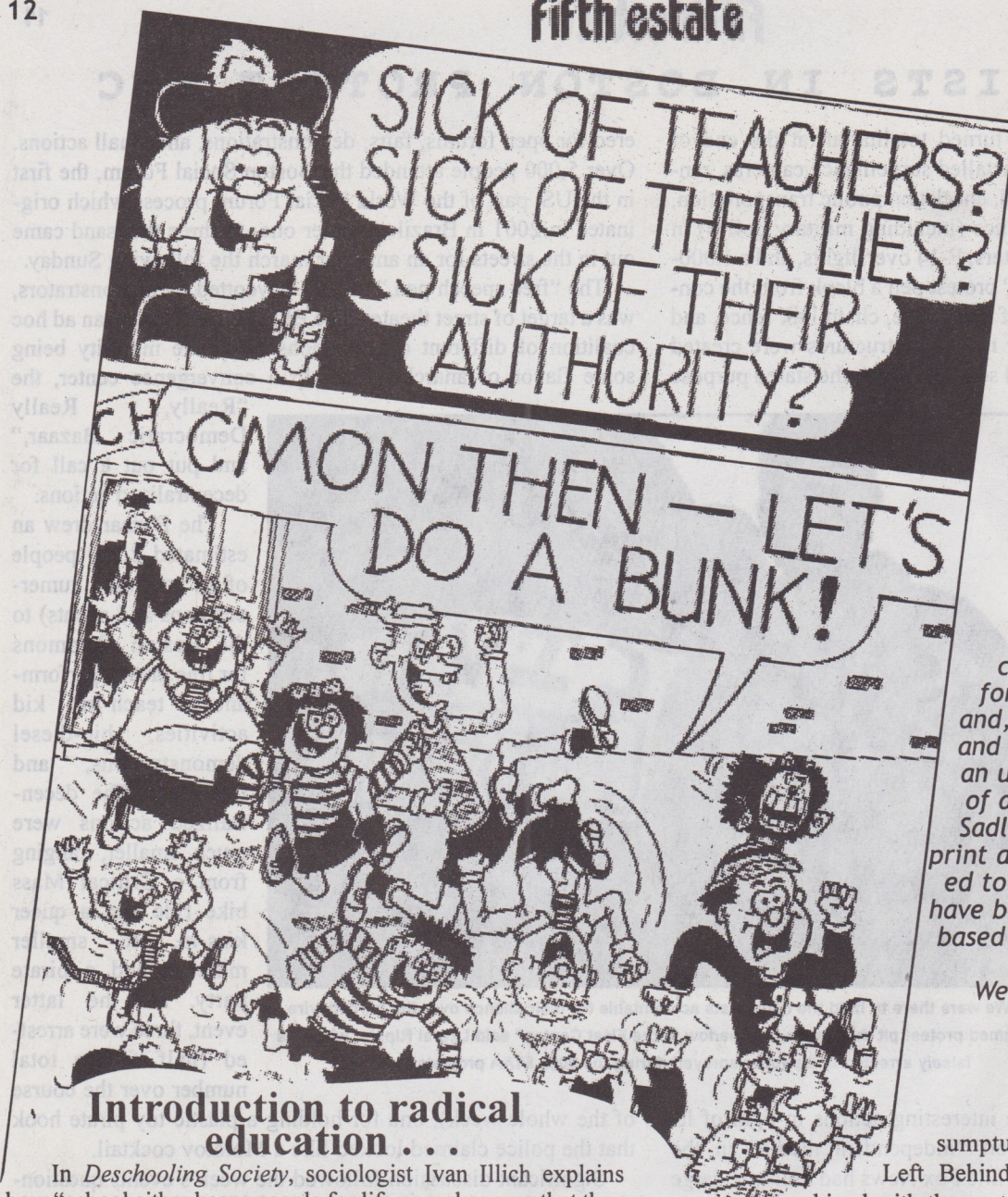
Significant discussion followed the week's events questioning why turnout of protestors at the DNC was so low in comparison to the tens and hundreds of people who have been a part of past mass actions. It appears that a number of factors were at play. Like the G8 protests in Georgia, organizers focused exclusively on decentralization at the expense of centralized actions. This appears to be an unneeded dichotomy, as decentralized actions can successfully take place alongside larger centralized ones and take advantage of the increased numbers of people present for the latter.

The fact that many trade union, women, queer, civil rights, and environmental organizations have either put their support behind Kerry or are actively not opposing him significantly lessened the amount of people coming out to protest the DNC. Finally, as with the G8, a number of participants decided to put off risk of arrest, and to put their limited amount of time and travel ability toward protesting the Republican convention in New York City. —Sterren



"We were there to hold the democrats accountable for their silence over the barbed wire rimmed protest pit that lies in the shadow of the Fleet Center," said Laurel Ripple, who was falsely arrested and pepper sprayed during the 2003 FTAA protests in Miami.





### Introduction to radical education . . .

In *Deschooling Society*, sociologist Ivan Illich explains how “school either keeps people for life or makes sure that they will fit into some institution.” In our special section on “Unschooling the World,” the *Fifth Estate* maps alternatives to this institutionalized reality; the following avalanche of articles attempts to sort out the conflicts and contradictions for a radical transformation of schooling—and subsequently, revolutionary social change.

While many of our contributors (and readers) are directly involved with various educational institutions, almost all of us are inextricably linked to traditional schooling, however far we are able to run from its tentacles of indoctrination, from our own histories with the traditional three R's of Repression, Rigidity, and Ritalin. Interestingly, the school has gradually replaced the factory as the mostly likely locus for revolutionary action, even as the state further promotes factory schooling and social stratification through high-stakes testing, increased competition and related forms of de facto segregation.

Indeed, new battle-lines for dramatic educational change have intensified with the congressional passing of the pre-

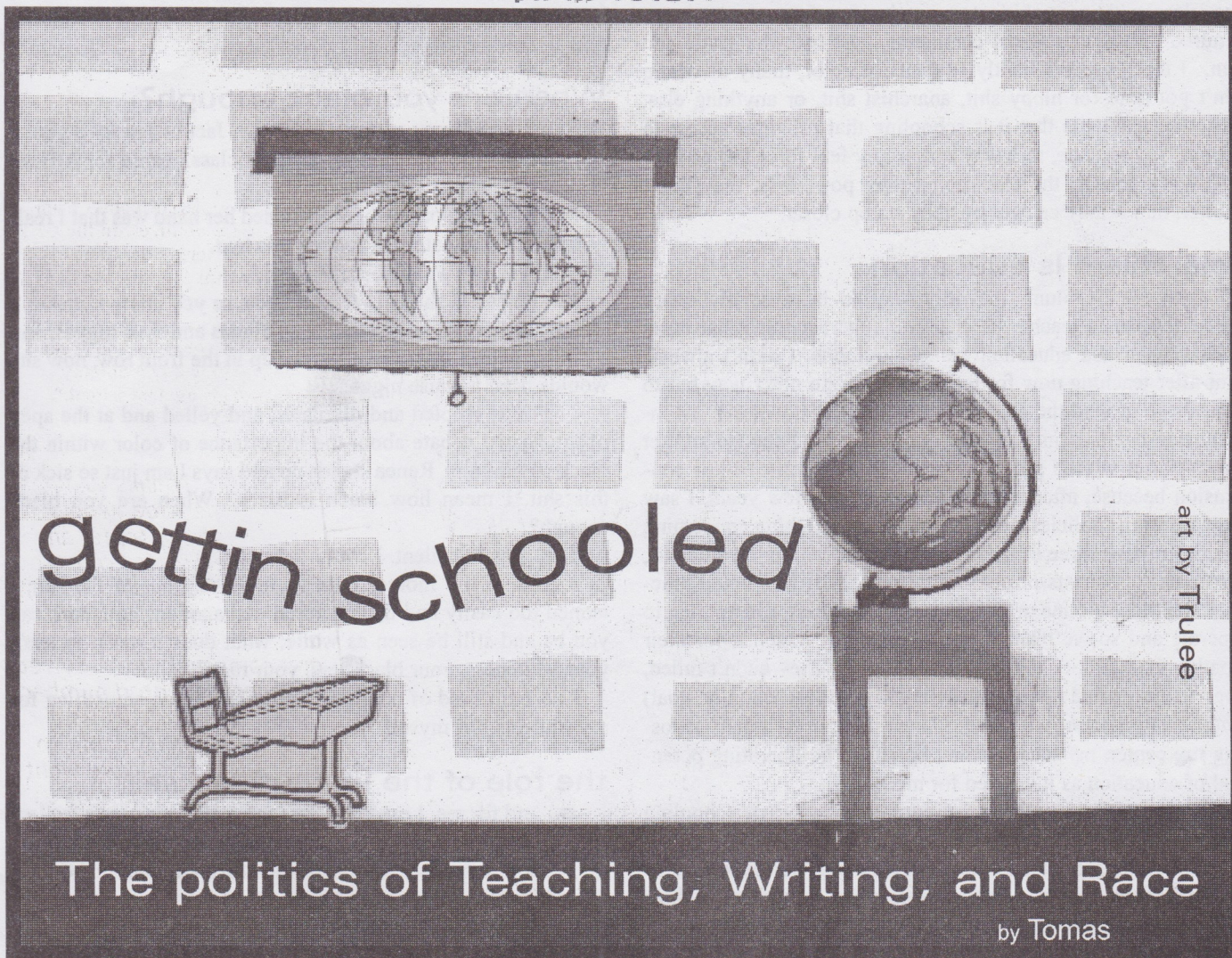
This graphic comes from the FE archives. In the UK, the term “do a bunk” means “to abscond” or “run off.” The original caption was: “We can run our own lives and make every day a holiday. Kids against school.”

Thanks to the wide appeal of the topic, an electronic “call for contributions” that was forwarded far and wide, and, of course, our readers and comrades, we received an unprecedented number of articles for this issue. Sadly, we were unable to print all the article we wanted to. However, some of us have begun to discuss a book based on what we've begun with this FE. We'll keep you posted.  
—Doug Graves

sumptuous No Child Left Behind (Untested) Act, combined with the post-9/11 mechanics of patriotic subjugation. I remember running into a former political science professor a week after 9/11, who complained how recent events were interrupting his lesson plans, how students were going “off-task” by suddenly questioning his (teacher-centered) curriculum. It is this emerging, often student-led rebellion against apathy and resignation that helps feed this unschooling issue.

We have loosely divided our presentation into five related and overlapping sections: a brief history and theory of radical and anarchist education, radical education within public schools and universities, critiques of disturbing trends within public education, and finally, a discussion of actual free schools and home schooling alternatives. These perspectives do not all agree on how to significantly “unschool”; they differ, in part, over the “fight or flight” mechanisms commonly triggered by the effects of schooling. Still, they all present an elevated urgency, a code red alert, for educating against empires. —Bill Blank, August 2004





I'm sitting with my developmental writing class towards the beginning of the semester. There are two white students, eighteen students of color, six international students. It's the exact opposite in my critical thinking class. But we aren't talking race yet; we're talking about language, about writing, about swearing in your papers, about slang. They point out that it's because I'm the teacher that I can encourage them to write in any way they want to. Because they know when they are done with me, they gonna have problems in the next class. It don't matter what we say, but how we say it, they point out. And since you a teacher and Mexican, you can use some spanglish like it's cool and all. When you a professional it's ok, not for us though.

They know about hegemony, about class hierarchies and how language is key to their success, or more precisely, their upward mobility. They tell me they need to lose their accents, and they need to lose their voice. They wanna write white.

I can only nod, wondering how to begin: how to incorporate anarchist solutions to the problems created by institutionalized schooling from within an institution, how to address race and patriarchy, how to stop nodding and be a revolutionary teacher.

## ain't got time for hippy shit

I consider myself an anarchist teacher of color and a failure. I teach in downtown Berkeley, California at the local community college. I teach English: the development/basic skills classes, the transfer level writing classes, the literature and creative writing classes. I teach an incredibly diverse population of students and attempt to, in all levels, create a student centered, non-hierarchic, non-coercive classroom. I attempt this in a myriad of ways from collaborating on texts we read; to providing multiple, varied, open-ended assignment prompts; to constant requests for input and feedback. I think I have done an incredible job at times inspiring students, creating for them choices that allow their own genuine exploration into ideas, into the meaning of their education, of writing, of voice, of critical consciousness. And I recognize the ways they provide those same possibilities for me.

And yet I still feel like a failure because each semester, each week, I find myself thinking of grades or seeing students acquiesce to the system that they know is bigger than any little cool class or teacher they might happen on. I see them making concessions and I see myself encouraging them to do so at times in order to continue receiving financial aid, in order to just pass



the class without making too much of a fuss concerning a tenured colleague's sexist comments. Just take the grade and run. I teach predominantly students of color, many of whom ain't got time for hippy shit, anarchist shit, or anything else, believing the hype that it is schooling that provides access to money, to privilege, to a way out. Many feel forced to be here and know that in the classrooms they powerless, they don't matter, that if they can get by, they a step closer.

### **anarchism is education**

**L**et me be blunt: the only way to be a revolutionary teacher, a teacher of change, is to recognize that anarchism and education are synonymous. I didn't always. But after teaching now for ten years I see no other way but to attempt to ground the anarchist principles of liberation, autonomy, non-coercion into my teaching. If I can't, I need to just get the fuck out while I still have my soul. I've come to this conclusion because, after initially teaching for a few years, I saw how reformist policies and solutions solved nothing concerning the destructive force of institutionalized education on students, particularly students of color. Teaching, as it was being practiced by those around me and, it seemed, myself, did nothing to liberate and so we blamed the victims, the students, for their apathy, their lack of interest, their failures. They hadn't failed, the institution had (though some argue it succeeded in its goal) and, by implication, we failed. I failed. I felt myself quickly losing my center, my idealism, my belief in the liberating potential of education as it worked for me.

Desperate for inspiration, I continued my own schooling (outside of classrooms, on my own time, with peers) about how to be a teacher, about the politics of teaching. I discovered critical pedagogy on race, autonomy, anarchy by writers such as bell hooks, Gloria Anzaldúa, Victor Villanueva, Paulo Freire. These people saved my faith in the power of working with others, in the potential for revolutionary teaching.

### **a necessary burden**

**T**he vast majority of my students see education as one of two things—a necessary burden to endure, perhaps to enjoy, but ultimately the “key” to a successful business career and, ironically, as the solution to our social ills. They are thankful; they see the institution as providing them their education. When I ask where they learned about love, about self-expression, about friendship, about communication, they acknowledge it was outside of class but that doesn't count, that's not “real” education that can get you anywhere. The other side is that school is fucked. It is oppressive, violent, racist, elitist, preventative, yet something they need to attempt to tackle, though most don't succeed and get spit back out to the streets, to the jails, to the unemployment line. And these two options are split along class lines and, specifically, along lines of race.

How are anarchist principles to combat this? And I'm back full circle to my own struggles to synthesize and connect race, anarchism, education, to theorize yet engage in both the classrooms I teach in and my life outside the classrooms (are those really separate rooms anyway?) I come back to questions of

how to be revolutionary in all facets of my life, how to connect, how to make change...

### **When are you black enough?**

**L**et me tell you a story. Is Harriet Jacobs black? a young woman asked in an English 1A class geared for African American students.

My initial response when she raised her hand was that I really failed to adequately introduce this text.

Well yes; it's a slave narrative and...

No. I mean is she B-L-A-C-K because you know it makes a difference; I mean there was house niggas and field niggas, and I woulda been a field nigga but her up in the front row, now she woulda been a house nigga...

The class erupted and discussed and yelled and at the apex of the heated debate about the importance of color within the black community, Renea stands up and says I am just so sick of this shit. I mean how black is black? When are you black enough?

The class fell silent. I could only nod.

I think of my mother telling me to stay out of the sun; I tanned too easily and that required explanation; how dark can you be and still be seen as white; what does it mean to learn your whiteness, your blackness, your race?

And I am tired of nodding. I promised to do something for my students, for myself.

### **the role of the institution itself**

**A**nd for me, I can't separate my experiences as a student of color from my writing, from teaching, from anarchist praxis. I have been the affirmative action boy, the one who's hired at 24 fresh out of grad school with little experience but brown skin and an ability to work with “those students.” Because I am one, right? Who hears the retiring white male who's supposed to be my mentor question his peers, “but can he really teach?” Yes I can, and teach I did. For the last ten years I have been a full-time English instructor specializing in developmental writing. I'm the one who was asked to develop the African American writing program because, “you work with those other students so well.” I'm the one asked to greet the local high schools visiting from the east side because they'll feel more welcome. I am brown; I look like them. But I knew all along that it takes more than just one of us in the department, more than two of us. Because I did all this and I still watched students of color fail.

I taught them how to use the academic voice, yet nurtured their alternative, home voices in classes and in papers to help foster a sense of pride and the possibility of options. But I saw students go to Cal or State, and come back tired, exhausted, bored, broken. I promised to do something about it. How had I failed to address issues of race within my teaching practices and within the educational system I was both a product of and an outsider to? When I began teaching, I thought I could make a difference; but now realize that although I can inspire, radicalize, nurture others, I must also struggle with the complexity of the social and educational system which is built on notions



of race that prevent any real change. Reform is not possible without a radical change in our understanding of writing, teaching, and race.

And that understanding, for me, came through my exploration of anarchy. It is the place I have found inspiration in realizing it is not I who provides, but the students. That I must respect and follow my desires to engage in a dialogue with them, to immediately discuss the role of the institution itself, to ask what it is I can do to work with them, to support them, to acknowledge what power I have and don't have. To, first and foremost, state unequivocally that Schooling is unfair and that I have a certain power that I could not break from even if I wanted to unless we walked out the doors. If I do these things immediately, the false dichotomies of Institutionalized Education begin to fall away. But then we as teachers need to replace them by helping to facilitate the students' own awareness, their own critical consciousness of how school works, and then discover how its hierarchical, authoritarian structure is mirrored in life, on the job, in relationships, at the multiple places in which we live our lives.

That's the key; that's the goal for any revolutionary teacher, any anarchist teacher, any teacher of any subject: to demonstrate that critical thinking is not limited to classrooms but extends itself into all our relations; that genuine questioning doesn't end with mathematical theorems or scientific formulas but makes connections to cooking, to poverty, to distribution of food, to Wal-Mart; to embody that practice and involve the students in creating classroom environments that address the intrinsic workings of a group, the historical nature of classroom hierarchy and patriarchy that happen all too often; to ask for suggestions and solutions. Genuinely.

And when you divest your authority and invest the students with creating the class they want to be in, you need to be both humble and prepared; you need to be open and honest in dealing with students who suddenly feel comfortable challenging you and your choices, critiquing how you handled a comment about rape, and how you ignored the woman in the corner while you called on the male student who always speaks. You will need to discover ways of working collectively as a group, of devising and instituting protocols so that people are provided a chance to explore their feelings—and it doesn't become a shout fest. And this is one small aspect of classroom management. We, as revolutionary teachers, need to share more of our experiences, more approaches that have been successful in encouraging students to own their education even in classes that are requirements, which no one there even has the freedom to choose not to take.

## students immediately smell the bullshit

To me anarchist teaching means recognizing my power in the institution of higher education, not pretending that I am not part of the problem as well. Students immediately smell the bullshit, know when you're fronting. My developmental class had to decide for themselves to write as they want to or as they believe they need to. By trusting and encouraging their own process of coming to a conclusion, by reading what they say honestly and engaging them in the discussions they want to have, and not what I think they need to have, they begin to trust themselves, their choices, their voices, and eventually you. And when they trust in their own voices, real revolutionary change can and does occur.

I realize that my goal in being a revolutionary teacher, an anarchist teacher, is to move, like the language we use in our lives, between the social structures that tend to divide and exclude. I want to do this in an effort to break them down, I believe, in connection to everyday activities—to praxis. If what I do within my own intellectual endeavors doesn't impact my students, doesn't support the people I live on the block with, it

don't mean shit. That is why anarchy and education are crucial. We experience them daily. Our interactions are consistently colored by race, racial policies, and stereotypes both from within and without: when I enter the corner liquor store, walk

**I have come to realize that radical or revolutionary teaching is concerned less about the situation—the classroom, the students, the level, the subject—and more about the process—the practice of critical thinking, critical examination.**

through groups of young men on the street, get pulled over by the cops. They color the way we speak to ourselves and to others. I ask myself what is my authentic voice: this one, the voice I welcome students with, the way I speak to my middle class hippie mother, to my children and lovers, to my father in jail who writes me stories of survival and love. I have come to realize that radical or revolutionary teaching is concerned less about the situation—the classroom, the students, the level, the subject—and more about the process—the practice of critical thinking, critical examination. As radical teachers we can be an integral part of helping students acquire that ability, or as preventative as cops or institutions.

By recognizing our place, being transparent and self-critical while also taking active responsibility for our choices, our policies or actions, we can partake in the active transformation of people in our communities. We can go from nodding to speaking. Out. And there is no failure in that.



There are many anarchist approaches to education from freeschooling to homeschooling to deschooling and beyond. The experience recounted here occurred in a much less receptive learning environment.

For twenty years, I taught a course, entitled "Anarchy and Social Change," at a university that was at first fairly experimental (student-centered, no grades, interdisciplinary, participatory decision-making and self-designed degrees), but which, over the years, deteriorated (though not without a battle) into the "anywhere USA" franchise of bureaucratic education that is so widespread today.

By the time I left teaching there, I was the only one that still refused to adopt the conventional techniques of academic discipline that were now prevalent elsewhere at the university. However, as a result of increasing corporatization, I could not as easily create an anarchist-learning experience as had once been possible. Moreover, the nature of the student body had shifted because the university was no longer seen as an attractive place by free spirited radicals. Even beyond the classroom, student ideas for community projects increasingly tended to be of the reformist variety.

Aside from the occasional student who identified with anarchy, my classes began to largely be flooded with students who did not really want to engage with anarchist ideas. They were often there simply because they had heard that there were no grades and expected an easy ride. Many of these more opportunistic students were not merely uninterested in anarchy, they were actively hostile to it. Their priorities were elsewhere and their defenses were up whenever transgressive ideas were introduced.

Other students, while somewhat curious about anarchy, were unconvinced that it was possible. Nice idea, but anarchy can't work in practice, they'd say, because "people are just too fucked up." Implied in this miserablist analysis were a variety of unexamined assumptions about human nature that led to a "taking care of number one" stance for some or a cynical hipster pose for others.

In effect, these students were telling me that before they would agree to seriously engage in learning about anarchy, they needed to know that it wasn't just pie in the sky. They wanted proof that human nature is compatible with anarchy or else why waste their time. Only by recognizing this challenge as valid and starting from there could the learning process begin. Fair enough. We began experientially by re-imagining and redesigning both the classroom and the learning process along anarchist lines, from creating learning affinity groups to collectively

deciding what to study and how to go about it, starting, of course, with human nature.

This was not easy work. Preconceived notions of human nature go deep and prevent us from learning about anarchy in more than a superficial "oh isn't that an interesting heresy" kind of way. This ingrained problem is further compounded by the prevailing post-modernist misreading of the anarchist view of human nature as essentialist and ideological. Yet what is often

dismissed as essentialist in anarchy is, in fact, quite nuanced.

Similarly, what is rejected as ideological is frequently seen that way because of the viewer's own unexamined ideological assumptions.

Take

Kropotkin. Based on his personal observations of animals surviving under the most difficult circumstances in Siberia, Kropotkin found not "survival of the fittest" in the

Social Darwinist sense, but "mutual aid." His is a very different story of how species survive than we are accustomed to hearing in capitalist society. As he speculated, like other animals, humans have within themselves the capacity for both cooperative and competitive behavior in solving problems of survival.

Which of these elements comes to the fore in social interactions depends largely on the values inculcated by the larger society. However, while it is an ideological assumption of capitalism that human nature is, in essence, competitive, that is only part of the picture. Even in a capitalist setting, there is no one inherently human way of taking care of survival, much less abundance.

Perhaps it is better for anarchists to think of human nature as encompassing an expansive repertoire of possible behaviors. In so doing, we can release human nature from the narrow confines of an essentialist logic that naively views it as either good or bad (or even evil as in the Judeo-Christian language of original sin). While anarchy emphasizes the potential for cooperative behavior embedded in human nature by referencing solidarity against oppression and for the creation of liberatory alternatives, it doesn't deny the will to power that the state and capitalism tap into so effectively.

In this sense, the authoritarian structures of civilization are not strictly based upon imposition for their success, but are built upon human proclivities for competition and control. It is precisely *because* you can't expect a system in which imperfect human beings are in positions of power to be free of domination that anarchists seek to abolish hierarchy rather than because they think human nature is necessarily good.

# Teaching Anarchy

While anarchy emphasizes the potential for cooperative behavior embedded in human nature by referencing solidarity against oppression and for the creation of liberatory alternatives, it doesn't deny the will to power that the state and capitalism tap into so effectively.

by Ron Sakolsky



However, while we must be vigilant about power dynamics, this does not mean that we need to accept a bleak dog-eat-dog conception of human nature. Authoritarian tendencies in human nature, while real, can be rewarded or discouraged. In turn, anti-authoritarian impulses toward cooperation never completely disappear and can be reinforced by an anarchist vision of social change. In my teaching, I used the following story as a catalyst to elicit related tales of mutual aid from my students.

Once I was in a freak accident that resulted in my van being totaled. On my drive home, I started to smell smoke. I pulled over toward the side of the road and saw that the engine was in flames. Not having a fire extinguisher at hand, I started to throw dirt on it to no avail. As I looked up in exasperation, I saw a woman running toward me with a fire extinguisher in her hand. Another car stopped with an extinguisher, then another. Still the fire raged. A guy pulled up, jumped out of his car and started directing traffic around my van. Another called the volunteer fire department. A third helped me grab my sleeping bag, tent, camping equipment and tools out of the vehicle. A fourth offered to stick around long enough to give me a ride home.

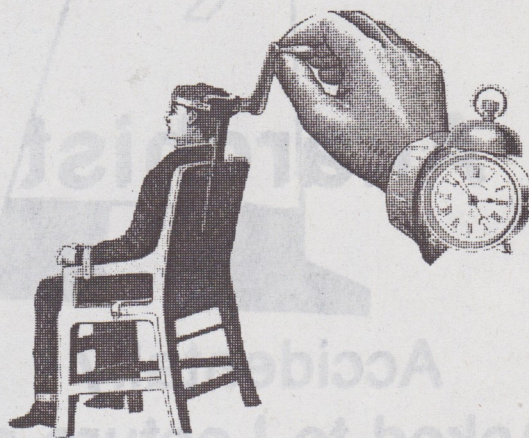
By the time the cops finally got wind of it and arrived, everything that could have been done to bring order to this chaotic situation had *already* been done. The arriving volunteer fire department trucks put out the blaze and I caught a ride home with a total stranger.

In fact, all these people that I've mentioned were total strangers. Yet, they weren't helping me because they were doing their anarchist duty, or because they were being paid to do so, but because they recognized their own vulnerability in my struggle and they acted on their most cooperative instincts. While this story doesn't have a moral, it offers us a lesson about

human nature. After all, someone could have stopped, clubbed me with their tire iron, stolen all my possessions from the car, rifled my wallet, and left me for dead. Humans are capable of such things. But this didn't happen. Somehow the people who offered their assistance to me saw their survival as *connected* to mine, and they were generous instead of predatory in their actions.

What people will do to survive is unpredictable because there is no essential human nature determining how they will act. In fact, against all odds, in a society where people live in isolated nuclear units and competition is the norm, they were cooperative.

Just think what might be possible if we lived in an anarchist society...



# adamant refusal will not go unnoticed

I've been giving the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) to my 3rd graders this week. I could be fired, possibly arrested, for telling you this, but do you want to know what's on the test? Here's one of the questions:

Why do cities have laws?

- to take people's money
- to make leaders powerful
- to give police officers jobs
- to help people live together

Do you know the "correct" answer?

The ITBS isn't testing whether your child knows the three branches of gov-

ernment or how bills become law. No. It's testing whether kids are being indoctrinated the "patriotic" way. One or two "wrong" answers won't cause alarm; kids are expected to miss a few. But if your child—who faces the same test at 5th and 8th grade—consistently gives "subversive" answers, rest assured, the government knows who you are.

So what else is going on at Patriot Elementary? Some of our students can't hold a pencil. Some of them are severely disabled and autistic. the Bush Administration wants us to test all of

them. Any student that is away sick during test week is scored zero. Say you hear about the ITBS and stop your child from taking part. Your child will be scored zero.

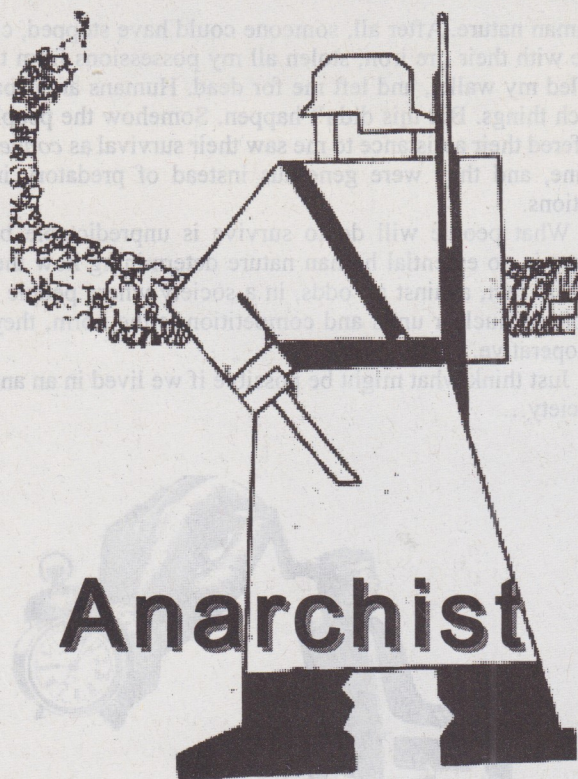
If a school performs badly in this test then its funding is cut. How is that going to help it identify and correct its problems? This test isn't made to help poor performing schools. It's to pressure schools to conform. This is a fear-based government scare tactic against its own people.

Of course, if you insist on resisting the ITBS, you might hear: "You want your child to graduate from 3rd grade, don't you?" Schools will say something like this, not because they're evil but because of the extreme pressure they face. Know this: no one can force a child to take the test. Also know: adamant refusal will not go unnoticed.

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This anonymous letter originally appeared on the "Letters" page of the expensive anti-consumerist art magazine, *Adbusters*, earlier this year.





## Anarchist

### Accidentally Asked to Lecture at Army Base

I teach world history classes at a small, third-tier state college. After the start of the US drive-by massacres of Afghanistan in the late fall of 2001, I completely changed the content of my history courses in order to emphasize the history of Islamic civilizations and the interactions of cultures in Central Asia and the Middle East with those of Europe. After the invasion of Iraq, I decided to focus especially on Western military incursions in that region since the Crusades. My course descriptions explain all this very plainly and are posted with all the other class listings on the college's webpage.

Recently, I came home to a message on my telephone answering machine from a lieutenant-colonel at the nearby army base who was looking for someone to come and speak to some soldiers that were being sent to Iraq, about the history and culture of that country. He said that he couldn't pay me for "helping out our troops," but he would see to it that I was reimbursed for gas and travel mileage for my efforts.

I took the next couple days to think it over. As an educator, I couldn't really resist the chance to speak to soldiers about things in a way that was different from all that gung-ho "making the world safe for democracy" idiocy that they had been told during training by their commanding officers. I could

explain to them why soldiers were not re-enlisting for duty in Iraq, and why it was that ordinary Iraqis—not "terrorists" or "foreign fighters"—were joining the resistance movement there against their "liberators."

But on the other hand, wouldn't I be contributing to the war effort by participating in an education program for the Army? I really didn't want to help make the job of military occupation easier for some clueless reservist, instead of explaining the historical differences between Shi'ites and Sunnis to US soldiers. Shouldn't I be avoiding being complicit with the military in any way at all, and doing what I could to confuse and not clarify soldiers' understanding of the mission in Iraq?

I posed this quandary to friends and comrades, and most (to my surprise, about 3 to 1) told me that I should go to the base and teach, that I needed to be a radical educator instead of an over-educated radical. A lot of the arguments that I heard made good sense. But before I called the lieutenant-colonel to accept the job, I spent about an hour doing some internet searches about the particular unit that I was supposed to speak to, and I learned very quickly that this was not a bunch of rural National Guard reservists as I had originally thought. In truth, this was a unit of Army intelligence specializing in "psychological operations" and "civil administration." These were low-level paper-shufflers analyzing intel for the US military occupation force's snitches, propagandists, and prisoner interrogators. I didn't think that there was anything that I could say to sway the attitudes of Army spies, so I called the base and told the commander that I refused to speak there.

The real lesson behind my invitation to speak to Iraq-bound troops is that it indicates that degree to which the US military is disorganized, ill-equipped, and poorly-trained—so much so that it desperately picked a name out of the faculty directory phonebook and hoped for the best. After all, by just Googling my name (my real name, not the pseudonym that I am using for this article), you could clearly see a list of my writings, my talks, and my work against war, empire, militarism, and the authority of the State. My course descriptions from the college catalogue spell out my attitudes towards Western military invasions in the Middle East. Presumably, a colonel in US Army intelligence would know how to use the internet to do a fifteen-minute background check on the person that he was asking to come and speak to his unit. But he couldn't be bothered.

Things are so slapdash and haphazard now in terms of shrinking troop strength, and so utterly out of control in terms of military operations, that the Army lacks the time, energy or resources to do something even so basic as to see whether or not the local expert could do more harm than good to young, unprepared intelligence analysts hurriedly rounded up for work in Operation Iraqi Freedom. It reinforced my hunch that the situation in Afghanistan and Iraq had become so disordered and despairing that even I could be considered for the Army's feeble attempts to train their soldiers to adapt to the dangers of military occupation.

—Palmer Eldritch



As someone who has spent her entire learning life in public schools, from a public elementary school in Oklahoma to a public University in Colorado, my career has been a multidimensional experience based on dynamic inquiry. Unlike many, I never really thought of my schools as limiting or controlling. Yet the same institutions that gave me so much vigorous opportunity sadly possess a nationalistic underbelly, a contradictory and conformist core.

When I went to college to study history, I didn't realize I'd soon be making history. But, somewhere during my initial search for understanding, a new administration seized the white house and initiated wars in distant lands. During this international chaos, my university burst with demonstrations for and against the war. Professors queried students freely concerning what they thought of the war and the present administration. Then, out of nowhere, the government implemented the Patriot Act, and things really heated up.

Nationwide, conservatives grabbed the opportunity to lobby against the voices of progressive, liberal, radical, or activist college professors and to stop public schools from harboring free thinkers. I witnessed this assault at the University of Colorado when the CU business school found a way to hire or fire on the grounds of political affiliation. This method began when the campus Republicans (aka the campus nazis) complained about the number of "liberal" professors in the business school. The campus Republicans accused their liberal professors of giving them poor grades as a result of these students' political affiliation. This slippery slope caused the Dean of the business school to ensure an equal count of Republicans and Democrats on his staff. Does the Dean of the business school know that these two parties are virtually the same when it comes to corporate capitalism?

This new method is appearing all over the country in public colleges and Universities, and not surprisingly, on state Senate floors. Due to right-wing sentiment that liberals are taking over the schools, the state of Georgia adopted the Academic Bill of Rights Resolution, which calls for more conservatism in the classroom. Also, since the passage of the Patriot Act, many professors have been accused of being "terrorists" (a term equivalent to being anti-war and dissident). These accusations have caused some professors to be fired; or worse, it has caused professors to silence themselves due to fear.

During my first year, a lively antiwar movement swept the campus. On a brisk Colorado autumn day, I left the Humanities building for some lunch. As I approached the student center, a very nice but upset looking woman handed me a piece of propaganda on why we should hate George W. Bush, and on the back was a listing of ten good reasons to protest the war in Iraq. I knew that these protesters were right and that I would need to help them. That day, I held a sign with the huge crowd and listened tearfully to what was said. I didn't go to the rest of my classes that afternoon.

As the school year progressed, I watched the university transform from a place of learning primarily about information in books to a place of social discourse, dissent,

and debate. The campus was now as catalytic to thought and insight as was the classroom.

Some of my fondest memories of that year are of the demonstrations that I witnessed and participated in. I rioted in the University Memorial Center with other students against the war. The riot started when the police took out their night sticks and pepper spray. Many were arrested, and that act of civil disobedience surely became an opportunity for the whole student body to assess where they stood on the war. At the end of the year, a large group set up a shantytown in the middle of campus. Vocal and visible, no one could ignore the problems of the war and the protesters. Most people on campus had to walk through this shantytown on their way to class.

My first year of college kept me awake and aware. Comrades were everywhere, and

I thought it would be nearly impossible to find people who supported war in Iraq. Sadly, different lessons came during my second year. As the protests and anti-war discourse slowed down, the entire school seemed to silence. Professors feared for their jobs. Peers from foreign countries were afraid to speak out for fear of deportation. This stagnation of free thought served as an open door for all sorts of scams by the campus Republicans and their cohorts. This taught me that I cannot always count on The Force to be with me, and that in fact, the world will not always be a warm and fuzzy group of sentimental activists ready to protest the government that oppresses them. Why? Fear is the only reason I can think of. Learning to combat this fear can only come through solidarity with others.

## "Studying History, Making History"

by Starla





# On (anarchist) Education (in a world of many worlds)

by brush



**“Education passes on more than knowledge—it transmits the lore, beliefs, customs, values, rites, and ceremonies that shape a society and govern its functioning. In short, education transmits culture.” —Randy Bass**

**W**e know what culture modern schools reproduce: Empire. Schools are prison-factories, churning out producer-consumers from alpha to epsilon, bastions of patriarchy. The institutionalized authority (as truth and discipline) of “teacher says”: the violent stewing chauvinism of clique and posse, the age-stratified, passive aggressive coercion to conformity. And of course, they are boot camps for capitalism, for learning to repress unmediated human desires (for love and play and learning) to work mindlessly (“for your own good”) under the pallid urging of those damned abstractions through which capital rationalizes life so that grades, with time, become money.

But as anarchists and rebels, as anti-authoritarians building a new world, what is our relationship with the transmission of culture?

Certain answers are familiar. Free schools and unschooling make learners the center of decision-making and motivation, facilitating healthier, smarter, and more autonomous people. These are crucially important; but are they everything? After all, as proponents consistently remind us, such education is so effective at transmitting the dominant culture that many self-directed learners ultimately become “successful” members of the Ivy League-trained upper classes. Why?

Sometimes, I think, we forget that what we learn is as important as how we learn. Our focus on the means by which education transmits culture often obscures the importance of which culture is being reproduced. To understand reproducing freedom, then, let’s look more closely at culture itself.

## the nature of culture

It is by culture that we become human and conscious; we cannot exist outside our social relations. Not only how we sing and dress, work and eat is organized by culture, but how we see, understand,

and value each other and the world. In the deepest ways, who we are depends on these modes of psychosocial reproduction.

And, because cultures vary so greatly over time and space, so does human nature—that is perhaps our species’ most distinctive characteristic. Within some cultures, people are so strongly interwoven with kin and homeland that individual lives are experienced as secondary to collective life or the life of the land. In such

communities, freedom may be defined more as autonomy from external control than as individuals’ rights to deviate from tradition. Indeed, traditions may be considered prerequisite for such freedom; consider those that maintain viable independent subsistence over time by inculcating ecological wisdom.

Our own society provides a deep contrast. The world has seen many ebbs and flows of tribe and empire, but we inhabit the late history of the greatest Empire the world has ever seen. Brought together by Christianity, fueled by capitalism, and maintained by white supremacy, swarming settlers from the shores of Europe and their sciences of domination established the sovereignty of their modes of social reproduction over almost everyone and everything on the planet.

**I**n our cultural world, then, thousands of formerly autonomous cultures and complex local worlds have been conquered, converted, and cajoled into the corrosive universal solvent of commodification and the market. By now, we inhabit a vast postmodern sea of incompletely digested identities and reactionary fundamentalisms. Freedom, here, is the right of the individual not to be bound by the mores of our fore-bearers, the right to be atomized political, economic actors. But this freedom ironically demands enforcement of its legally-constructed balances of power; indeed, it assumes the sovereignty of Empire.

I think we need to open our understanding of freedom to the multiplicity of scales of psychosocial reproduction: from fractured identities within an individual, through families and collectives, communities of a thousand kinds, (neo)tribes and post-states, and the entire social globe.

So, from Buddhist sanghas attempting personal liberation in the enlightened release of all attachment, to punk scenes sharing styles of Empire-defiance written in the body, to Zapatista encuentros calling upon our many communities to learn an indigenous hospitality, freedom becomes a richly articulated interplay between levels of being that we can grow—in ourselves and our children. But how?



## a world of many worlds

**S**ocial movements around the world point towards new kinds of liberatory culture. We recognize ourselves in our great No! to the globalization of Empire; but I think our movement of movements, our embryonic world of many worlds, is described more deeply by our halting, partial Yeses. As constructed communities finding ways to undermine and avoid the disciplines of imperial reproduction, we tear asunder the political-economic universalism that underlies imperial "multiculturalism." In its place, we find ourselves building local communal autonomy, in solidarity with the indigenous. In the Zapatista imperative: "You will no longer be you, now you are us!"

To transform the world, to become the death of Empire, we must build coherence and cooperation without undermining differences. We must weave every fragment and moment, every commune and collective, reproducing liberation into rich interarticulation.

This is true for organizing reasons, so that without central authority we can coherently act to undermine Empire, defend rebellious spaces, and transfer our economic life out of capitalism and into mutual aid. But it's also true for liberation itself: if freedom is not to be confined within the limited horizons of isolated groups, then it will comprise the ability, first, to choose specific communities, and second, to influence and intertwine them so richly that self and collective become a resonant mutual constitution open to inspiration and spontaneity, wisdom and experience.

This is the multitude: small, decentralized communities woven into coherence by many local, overlapping liaisons between (virtual, ideological, geographical) neighbors, through which flow (partial) communication, coordination, and consensus. From this perspective, the revolution is not a process of transforming the existing society, even radically, but of learning from each other ways to grow our social relations evermore independent of the Empire, so that it is dismembered: in a word, rebellion.

## rebellion: freely learning freedom

**I**f our new world of many worlds is to be free, we must effectively reproduce freedom. This, I believe, is the task of truly anarchist education.

No matter the autonomy of the process of self-directed learning, a child is always educated into a particular culture. A simple example: traditional Inuit education is often invoked to exemplify learner-direction and freedom. Young Inuits (we are told) play and wander, observing adults and their activities, free to apprentice with whomever they choose. Expertise is developed in particular areas (shamanism, preparing food, hunting) as young people gravitate to the role they relish most. This is a powerful model, of a village

raising a child, that I think we would do well to emulate; but it should be clear that no matter how free the child, ze became an Inuk.

Firstly: approaches that naturalize the skills, values, and knowledges of imperial culture will tend to reproduce Empire, no matter how learner-directed. Secondly: to grow our nascent autonomous spaces into a full parallel political economy capable of absorbing multitudes into decentralized and relatively autonomous communities, we should focus on developing educational structures that effectively transmit our cultures of freedom. For newcomers, for our children, for ourselves, such foci of social reproduction will allow us to gather and share our collective wisdoms in ways that reinforce practices of liberatory organizing.

Moreover, a plural multitude requires making strong horizontal relations between communities a key educational value. This means not simply a liberal tolerance of minorities, but reproducing worldviews in which incompatible belief systems are recognized as autonomously legitimate. We will mine our various traditions to find

... revolution is not a process of transforming the existing society, even radically, but of learning from each other ways to grow our social relations evermore independent of the Empire, so that it is dismembered: in a word, rebellion.

stories, values, and skills that build listening and respect across difference. Rather than prepackaged documentaries on exotic peoples, radical education will emphasize

immersion in the many cultures that make up our local and global rebellions. Thus, we educate for liberation, providing tools for social agency by which individuals can work together with respect and openness to change the reproduction of their lives.

Finally, we must recognize our power as infectious agents disrupting and subverting the lines of imperial discipline with our contagious liberation. This is not to deny the obvious danger of the mechanisms of glittering imperial psycho-manipulation so visible in advertising, media, and academia. But the critical skills and systems knowledge that allow us to observe the shiny trinkets of bourgeois desire with disdain, can be learned.

Though for the foreseeable future there will be rebel children attending public school, such engagement need be neither drudgery nor trap, but a subversive opportunity to organize learning for liberation. Indeed, once the spell of bourgeois certainty is broken, many fragments of subversive wisdom or useful skill can be cannibalized from the monstrous edifice of Western knowledge. An example is the quote at the beginning of this article, from a Georgetown academic. While he may never use "education transmits culture" to criticize the role mainstream schooling plays in reproducing Empire, the insight is useful for us when we reinscribe it into our own radical context.

Despite the academicians, even bourgeois education can awaken the soul (with a little help from our friends) to the lifelong journey for a world of many worlds of liberation. And aroused, aware, our education becomes rebellion!



# STUMBLING UPON PUBLIC SCHOOL UTOPIAS: TALES FROM TWO FRONT LINES

## PART ONE: UTOPIA OUTLINED

February 1999: I'm pivoting on my desk, basking in a student-led discussion, momentarily featuring a couple of black-clad teenagers contrasting the ideological differences between Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid* with Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*.

The twenty alert faces of the elective "Russian Social Anarchism," stretch about the carpeted room, where Pilot pens race across lined paper as if there are only seconds left to write before our CD musical segue into Chumbawamba, while a girl with cropped pink hair raises her hand, eager for the previous student to call upon her.

I join the note scribbling with three reminders; block the final scene to Chekhov's *The Seagull* for the upcoming Russian theater class-troupe, confirm one of next month's guest speakers on "Mendacity in the Mass Media," and call the concerned mother who is wondering why I am supplementing our latest readings with two articles from the Fifth Estate.

This is a typical hour for this ambitious school within a school, a 99% all-white suburban high school, Birmingham Seaholm, in one of the most affluent communities in the entire state of Michigan. The student-centered, teacher-guided, interdisciplinary social studies and English curriculum known as Flex (for flexible learning) is the closest I will come to experiencing a near perfect educational utopia. A merging of exhilarating high school inquisitiveness with college-level course work, the dynamic curriculum often functions consistently with anarchist principles, such as unanimous consensus teacher organizing, diverse student-selected course offerings, and even student-led seminars [for a short history on the origins of anarchist free schooling, see the companion article on Francisco Ferrer and the Spanish Modern Schools].

I quickly come to savor and be spoiled by this unique public school oasis. For five months I treasure this thirty-year old experiment in creative critical learning, kept alive mainly by a half dozen eclectic, highly dedicated teachers, and an active parent minority—an educated elite either nostalgic for their lost sixties idealism, or patronizingly realistic, preparing their children for their eventual encounter with liberalism, on the way up some well-nourished corporate ascensions.

The new principal remains puzzled over how such a hippie

relic continues to thrive amid such a conservative and opulent populace. His irritation swells proportionately to his growing awareness of a complete lack of hierarchy. In the spirit of anarchism, Flex contains no department head, no chief organizer—indeed, no chain of command as all decisions are made unanimously by its small teaching collective, usually in relation to subsequent student feedback.

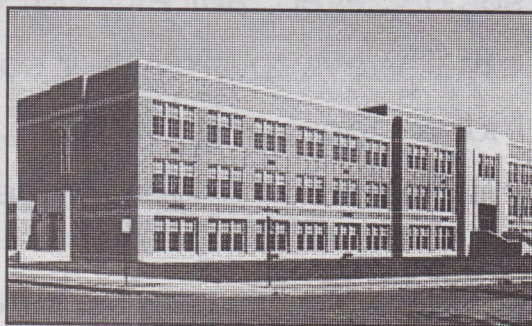
Suspicious of such freedoms after thirty years of thriving achievement, the administration announces impending cutbacks and forced transfers for at least two of the Flex teachers, just after renovations for the district's two football fields, totaling over \$500,000, are completed. Already well educated in the history of protest, these Flex students reflexively rally around their besieged mentors. The kids conduct impromptu teach-ins, disrupt assemblies, gather hundreds of student and parent signatures, spontaneously create satirical street theater in the hallways, and even storm the principal's office to demand educational justice.

Assuming such an uprising could not be student-directed, their most recent hire (me) becomes one of the suspected agent provocateurs. Top school administrators reveal their displeasure at my support of the upstart student activism, as they withhold part of my permanent substitute pay. I contemplate staging a one-teacher picket line and strike.

Although the besieged Flex program will eventually be salvaged, I know my happy days in suburban utopia will soon crash. As students begin debating the implications of their newest teacher quitting, I abruptly walk out a few weeks before school ends, before I could be officially terminated.

## PART TWO: CROSSING THE GREAT DIVIDE

Out of my anarchist dream job, in late August 1999, I crash-land six miles south, winding up at Oak Park High, in the poorest school district within the same (Oakland) county as Birmingham; it's adjacent to Detroit, with a majority of students claiming Detroit addresses. I'm assigned five social studies classes, each crammed with over 30 African American and one or two Chaldean students (although I have only thirty desks total, it's quietly assumed that at least a couple of students will always be absent each day). Approximately 75 percent of the student population lists their mother or grand-





mother as sole head of the (rented) household (often low income apartment or duplex), where the average reading level falls somewhere around the fifth or sixth grade—if the student reads at all.

On my ten minute perfunctory welcome tour of the social studies department, I ask the retiring department head if he could let me into the school's chain-locked little theater. Annoyingly puzzled, he responds, "Why would you want to look around there? I don't know who has a key, it hasn't been used in years."

He seems much more interested in showing me the world studies textbook he's ordering en masse, the expensive hard-cover intrusion that will allegedly raise test scores if applied accordingly. I glance at the glossy pages, quickly noting two complete paragraphs about the first Gulf War. One colleague would later quip, "You've gone from teaching a university-like high school to baby-sitting a minimum-security middle school."

At the risk of sounding self-congratulatory, I remain here, six years later, among the "disadvantaged," still attempting to

## **LINGERING ENTHUSIASM AND CONFIDENT SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE ARE NEVER ENOUGH TO**

recapture that educational utopia, to see if anarchist or anti-authoritarian free schooling can informally flourish within the authoritarian chaos known as urban schooling. Teaching from a mix of lingering enthusiasm and confident subject knowledge is never enough to overcome massive inequity; this challenge inevitably involves student histories of poor nutrition, little or no exercise, and minimum-wage family subsistence, not to mention some with additionally abusive backgrounds.

What can a student-centered, anti-authoritarian teacher accomplish with such negative odds? If I stay teaching here, won't I succumb to the bitter cliché of the burned-out, over-idealistic teacher, full of resentment and resignation?

Common observations about the widespread resistance to radical reform would seem to discourage most liberal teachers in the front lines of poverty and race. "These kids only understand yelling at them, they're used to it, it's the only thing that works in their broken homes," a high school coach erroneously asserts, as I inquire about coaching baseball.

His disciplinarian desperation pervades the flipside of teacher indifference. When many of the students don't fear the police (who visit almost daily), threats from teachers or the principal's office sound empty indeed. I wonder, how can we teach "Anarchy 101" with a student population largely apathetic, if also frequently in trouble with the law? Or, more to the point: in public schools, do all free school teachers inevitably degenerate into public school authoritarians?

## **PART THREE: HIDDEN FREE SCHOOLING WITHIN PUBLIC SCHOOLING**

In a school where most students seldom engage in any real group discussion, even within their own families, true dialogue is a major skill acquisition, and for some, an obvious therapeutic release, a fresh, communal entry into the world of critical and personal expression.

"Mr. B, can we blast now?" Antonia implores, after the class noisily rearranges their desks into a loose circle. Before I can say sure, she launches into a humorous diatribe about how one of her unnamed English teachers keeps swearing at them in class, while Antonia casually follows our simple "blasting" guidelines: "no names, one person at a time, and we yield to the raised hand and to the people who haven't spoken yet."

This informal hourly exercise might seem quite trite. Teaching the rules of formal debate offers a greater challenge—our student population has no debate class or debate club (and so what, I offer it anyway in virtually all my classes)—yet it also reveals surprising rewards, even if an incompetent or indifferent administration assumes such digressions are either too complex for "their children," or too far astray of their test-obsessed (authoritarian accountability) agenda.

The subtly supervised "blasting" example represents a paradox of teaching, particularly for those with strong anti-authoritarian leanings in poorer settings, because such deviations can fly against a favorite fiat of administrators (and their dutiful union enforcers): "You must follow orders (like teaching to the test-based curriculum) or it's insubordination!"

The temptation of self-censorship, to retreat from creative anti-authoritarian principles and practices, is often overwhelming—usually out of fear for non-tenured teachers and out of habit for tenured veterans. The old job security reminder, "Your position is secure as long as you don't strike or sleep with a student," may not sound reassuring. Yet while few professions have as high a turnover or burnout rate, few occupations can also foster such an open environment for significant change after the employee (the teacher) closes the door and begins working (the art of teaching, of opening other doors).

Here are nine modest practical educator suggestions, besides the perennial pleas for small class sizes and better administrative support, for helping create alternative free school environments within the typically underprivileged public school:

1) Make actual dialogue a persistent, top priority. Real discussion liberates as it transcends teacher-dominated lectures and test-directed formats.

2) Read, out loud, at least one provocative news article, brief essay, poem or short story a day (silent reading will not work with semi-illiterate students). The ultimate obstacle to dynamic education remains the video screen, the television at home, that erodes creativity, cultivates passivity and also helps feed obesity. You may be the only force encouraging such a liberating activity as reading. Rise to the occasion, and toss out the "mandatory" textbook for better literature (and art).



3) Befriend a co-worker (preferably several) with similar alternative interests. This may seem obvious, but staff friendships can blossom into cooperative teaching, where teachers go beyond sharing materials and resources, to potentially combining some of their classes (including shared discussions or presentations). The lone wolf approach of the quirky teacher in hiding ends up modeling isolation, instead of collective transformation.

4) Bring the outside world inside the classroom. Most school curriculums claim to promote community involvement, often through guest speakers, so bring them on: invite visitors, including ones who closely share your radical views, who can bring ideas into the room that might otherwise be rejected by students or reprimanded by administrators. Some of my more invigorating classroom discussions are triggered by lecturing cops and judges—especially just after they leave the room.

5) Strongly urge community involvement and evaluation. Related to #4, this is educator John Gatto's most avid radical reform, even if many districts have severely limited field trip budgets. Getting students out of the school, away from the TV and Play Station video, to then discover community involvement on their own, will be met with much early resistance, but once the term "community research" broadens, the potential for making critical connections intensifies. Neighborhood street fairs, local concerts, club raves, even house parties, can find their way into the class dialogue and onto paper as links to eventual community activism. Even many conservative schools are now requiring community service, so why not take up where the state leaves off?

6) Take at least one field trip to a more affluent school. Birmingham Seaholm and Oak Park High have enjoyed student exchange days with each other for five years. Such experiences permanently elevate the level of discussion and investigation for the rest of the school year. Most cities have similar economic divides, and most districts want to at least pay lip service to "diversity" (diversity clubs can be cute, but they're hardly effective if they stay only within the school). When such race lines are crossed, prepare yourself to be surprised by how much conversation shifts to class and income.

7) Demonstrate how to protest, even if you don't leave the classroom. An initial shock greets me each year I survey my students: almost all have no idea what civil disobedience is, or that many forms of protest are actually quite legal. When our school media center inexcusably closed for over a month for minor repairs, my students and I ended up picketing throughout the halls with their homemade signs. The media center reopened two days later. Most student feedback claimed it was their most exciting project all year. Half of my final exam (we're supposed to give some type of test) asks students to conduct a sit-in on the floor with the cause of their choice. No one ever fails that part of the exam, in case you're wondering.

8) If you are ordered to use some formalized testing assessments, try to use student-centered evaluations. There are many subtle options here, including cooperative exams written by the classmates (the final draft can still be organized by the teacher), as well as coinciding assessments of the instructor (thicker-

skinned teachers, desiring maximum candor, may make this feedback anonymous).

These egalitarian approaches also demand resisting all high-stakes standardized testing by whatever means available (wealthy Birmingham kids simply have their parents write notes excusing them from the tests, but impoverished districts, more desperate for the potential trickle of funds, require more ingenuity). For further informational tips and inspirational ideas, find the rouge forum (originally founded in Detroit) at [rougeforum.org](http://rougeforum.org).

9) Befriend select students. Some students will never like or trust the teacher, and vice-versa. Some kids could receive high wages for participating and they would still retain their animosity or apathy, for a variety of reasons. However, there should always be at least a few students you connect with on a more meaningful level each year. If you feel awkward inviting any into your home or neighborhood, share your email address or phone number. They could become a friend, a fellow radical, for a long time to come, while letting you know which of your lessons stand the test of time.

Of course, many of these proposals may seem like only liberal reformist pedagogy. None of my overcrowded and undernourished students are preparing for an Ivy League university, and they won't be reading *Crime and Punishment* this year—but they may get exposed to *Mutual Aid* while reconsidering plans for enlisting in the military.

They will also be reading the latest issue of the *Fifth Estate*, and maybe some will bring it home for their mothers to read. Security guards and suspended cameras may clutter every hallway, but like most schools, they haven't started installing cameras in the classrooms. When that Orwellian development becomes a classroom fixture like the clock on the wall, it will be time to abandon the public school.

The revolution will not be televised, nor will it happen at the factory, once seen as the traditional flashpoint for mass upheaval. The revolution won't happen with factory schooling either, but it may begin through radical classrooms within liberal education. It did for me.

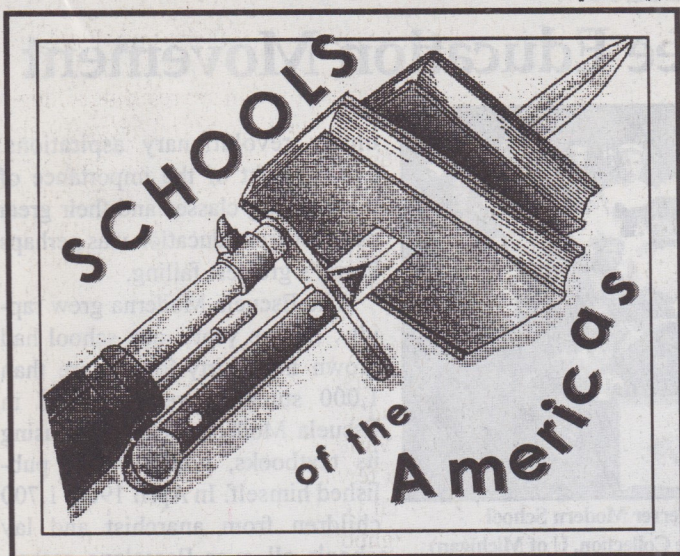
If there is any real hope for a deep human transformation it will be through the construction of communities of resistance against the current conditions of barbarism, and will most likely come from schools—or classrooms—that at least attempt to make such transformations, such elusive utopias, possible.

Tonight I'm supposed to meet up with two excited graduate seniors, Natalie and Nedra, at the Idle Kids anarchist space in Detroit, to catch a special screening of *The Weather Underground* documentary. I'm anxious to hear their review of *Fahrenheit 9/11*. Tomorrow, I plan on again trying to reach a former student who's now an interpreter somewhere in Baghdad. I hope she's still alive and unharmed. Long live the free classrooms.

—William Boyer  
July 2004

[Thanks Bill, for all your help producing this issue.  
—the Tennessee editorial group]





In *The Underground History of American Education*, the renegade educator John Taylor Gatto traces the genealogy of compulsory public-school education in the US back to the system of pedagogy created in the nineteenth-century northern European state of Prussia. Prussia is often seen by historians as the architect of German nationalist unification; after the Napoleonic invasion of 1806, the Prussian military aristocracy decided that it needed to reform education in that kingdom so that new, centralized schools could produce “obedient soldiers to the army; obedient workers for mines, factories, and farms; well-subordinated civil servants, trained in their function; well-subordinated clerks for industry; citizens who thought alike on most issues; and national uniformity in thought, word, and deed.” The Prussian education model became heavily geared toward patriotism and civic virtue after the near-success of the Revolution of 1848; the ruling class in Prussia wanted to insure that the contagion of revolutionary ideas was not being picked up in the schools.

The attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001 have triggered a similar response in the US to the one in Prussia that was precipitated by Napoleon’s invasion and the uprisings of 1848. One of the most influential of these education reformers is Chester E. Finn, Jr. Finn, an advisor to Bush on the ghastly “No Child Left Behind” project and on matters of curriculum and public school privatization. Finn presently runs the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, an organization concerned with funding rightist and reactionary efforts to overhaul the elementary and secondary public school system in the US. One of their fundamental efforts is to create and enforce “a solid core curriculum” that includes lessons on civics, citizenship, character building, and patriotism.

This year, the Foundation targeted the way that “controversial episodes in US history” (notably the September 11th attacks and the 2003 invasion of Iraq) are taught in K-12 class-

rooms. To aid elementary and secondary school teachers in this endeavor, the Fordham Foundation offers many free materials for classroom use, such as the 108-page booklet of 29 essays called *Terrorists, Despots and Democracy: What Our Children Need to Know*. In the introduction to *Terrorists, Despots and Democracy*, Finn explains that the essay collection is meant as “an antidote to some of the dubious advice and pernicious ideas that are all too widespread within the education field” about 9/11 and Iraq spread by extremist organizations like the National Education Association, the American Red Cross, and PBS. To stave off the dangers wrought by K-12 teachers who do not “love our country and the ideals for which it stands,” *Terrorists, Despots and Democracy* offers up plenty of the Fordham Foundation’s ready-to-xerox gospel truths.

**The Fordham Foundation is just one of  
the many far rightist think-tanks  
exploiting the collapse  
of US public school funding.**

Some of the choice morsels in this booklet include Victor Davis Hanson’s “Preserving America, Man’s Greatest Hope”; an odd article on “intellectual freedom” by Lynne Cheney (the US vice-president’s wife); a piece on the importance of teaching the differences between right and wrong by gambling addict and chairman of the pro-war pressure group Americans for Victory Over Terrorism William J. Bennett; and an argument in favor of “The Doctrine of Pre-Emption” by Stanley Kurtz, formerly the director of the Moshe Dayan Center (!) for Middle Eastern Studies at Tel Aviv University and an especially truculent neo-conservative editor for *The National Review*. The booklet concludes with bibli-

ography of “recommended resources” that includes items like Michael Novak’s *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism*, Thomas G. West’s patriotically-correct and historically inaccurate *Vindicating the Founders: Race, Sex, Class and Justice in the Origins of America*, and the URL for “a wealth of information on the Middle East” assembled by the Zionist war-monger and Bush’s personally selected chairman for the US Institute of Peace, Daniel Pipes. Finally, under the section of the bibliography list called “Character Development,” the Fordham Foundation recommends a biographical polemic by the 1950s HUAC show-trial superstar and ratfink Whittaker Chambers, and, even weirder, a website listing for the “American Girls Collection,” a ludicrously expensive doll and toy catalog.

The Fordham Foundation is just one of the many far rightist think-tanks and non-governmental (or so they claim) organizations that are exploiting the collapse of US public school funding. By offering free classroom materials and re-education camp teacher-training seminars, they have developed a means for delivering a venomously nationalist ideological payload under the guise of pedagogy. Thanks to the standardized strait-jackets of “No Child Left Behind” performance testing, it may be only a matter of time before indoctrination into the tenets of American exceptionalism replaces social studies education in elementary and high school classrooms.

—Don LaCoss



# Francisco Ferrer & the Free Education Movement

Today, the concept of a free school has many connotations. It can mean the freedom to choose what to learn or whether to learn at all. But whatever we mean by free, we can't really discuss the free schools of today without some background in the Modern School movement that began more than a century ago.

The Modern School or Free Education Movement, rooted in the contributions of many 19th century anarchists, would blossom with Spanish anarchist educator, Francisco Ferrer and his Escuela Moderna.

Rooted in competition, the old model of classical education relied on memorization by rote, the suppression of natural curiosity, and the separation of genders, with the overall emphasis on submission to authority.

In contrast, the free education system, based on principles of egalitarianism, recognized all people deserved an education, which nurtured the talents of all students, without the use of force or authority. Skills should be developed in ways stimulating to the students, through direct, multi experience with the world around them.

Francisco Ferrer Guardia was born near Barcelona in 1859. Though his parents were practicing Catholics, his free-thinking uncle strongly influenced him. As a young man, Ferrer's involvement with the anticlerical, radical republican movement included an aborted attempt on the life of General Villacampe.

In France, Ferrer would refine his anarchist philosophy, devoting himself to the cause of free education. This included how open investigation and discussion could replace isolated study and examinations, which meant turning classrooms into cooperative communities rather than some competitive academia. In 1899, Ferrer married a wealthy teacher and supporter of the experimental school at Cempuis. While in Paris, Ferrer offered free Spanish lessons; one of his most notable pupils, a wealthy spinster named Jeanne Ernestine Meunier, left Ferrer a sizable fortune when she died in early 1901.

Ferrer returned to Spain later that year, now more of a threat to Spanish authorities than ever—not only as a radical reformer, but as a wealthy one, and he wasted little time putting his money towards radical reform. In September 1901, Ferrer opened the Escuela Moderna. The professed goal of the school was to educate the working class in a rational, secular, and non-coercive setting, yet the school's high tuition soon allowed only wealthy middle class students to attend.

Ferrer planned to train a revolutionary vanguard of middle-class anarchists through his schools. Ironically, he only gained middle-class support for his schools by emphasizing the reformist aspects of his philosophy and downplaying his gen-



The Detroit Francisco Ferrer Modern School  
(photo courtesy of the Labadie Collection, U of Michigan)

uinely revolutionary aspirations. Losing sight of the importance of the working classes and their great need for free education was perhaps Ferrer's greatest failing.

The Escuela Moderna grew rapidly. In five years, one school had grown into thirty-four. More than 1,000 students were enrolled in Escuela Moderna schools or using its textbooks, which Ferrer published himself. In April 1906, 1,700 children from anarchist and lay schools all over Barcelona assem-

bled in a demonstration of the widening reach of free education. Unfortunately, Ferrer's troubles would soon intensify.

That September, Mateo Moral, an employee of Ferrer's printing house, threw a bomb at the wedding procession during King Alfonso XIII's marriage celebration. Moral committed suicide shortly afterwards, leaving Ferrer as the government's scapegoat. He was arrested as the mastermind of the bombing and all the anarchist schools in Barcelona were closed. Predictably, reactionary forces sprung on the chance to connect free education with political violence.

An international campaign for his release quickly developed, and Ferrer maintained his innocence. Lacking evidence to convict, the government reluctantly acquitted him in June 1907. But the damage was done. Ferrer's moderate allies in Spain weren't willing to be publicly connected to a suspected assassin. Many lay schools stopped using his textbooks.

In July 1909, spontaneous protests broke out in Barcelona, evolving into a general strike against the Moroccan War in what became known as the "Tragic Week." In the course of the riots, 80 religious foundations were destroyed. The government responded by declaring martial law.

Once again, Ferrer became the scapegoat. That September, he was arrested and tried by military tribunal. Although Ferrer had very little, if anything, to do with the revolt, he was convicted as the "author and chief" of the "Tragic Week" events and was executed by firing squad in October 1909. Defiant to the end, his last words (translated) were, "Long live the Modern School!"

Known internationally, Ferrer's execution caused an uproar throughout North America and Western Europe. Ferrer became a martyr for modern education and a key figure in Spanish anarchism.

Ferrer put free education on the (international) map, proving how it could spread through his modern schools, while helping lay the foundation for the Spanish revolution only two decades away. Subsequent schools throughout Europe and America were built on the model of the Escuela Moderna, and educators today still have much to learn from Ferrer's contributions to free education. —John Brinker & William Boyer



Cultural critic Ivan Illich died in December 2002 at the age of 76. In tribute after tribute, his personal friends and admirers of his work marvel at Illich's enduring generosity, humility, and radical spirit. While many at Fifth Estate have appreciated his influence, we never paid proper tribute. Now with this unschooling issue, we share a poem from one of our regular contributors and a very brief excerpt from the essential and prophetic 1970 book *Deschooling Society*.

## Learning Webs

The alternative to dependence on schools is not the use of public resources for some new device which "makes" people learn; rather it is the creation of a new style of educational relationship between man and his environment.

I intend to show that the inverse of school is possible: that we can depend on self-motivated learning instead of employing teachers to bribe or compel the student to find the time and the will to learn; that we can provide the learner with new links to the world instead of continuing to funnel all educational programs through the teacher.

The educational institutions I will propose are meant to serve a society which does not now exist, although the current frustration with schools is itself potentially a major force to set in motion change toward new social arrangements.

A political program which does not explicitly recognize the need for deschooling is not revolutionary; it is demagoguery calling for more of the same.

A good educational system should have three purposes: it should provide all who want to learn with access to available resources at any time in their lives; empower all who want to share what they know to find those who want to learn it from them; and, finally, furnish all who want to present an issue to the public with the opportunity to make their challenge known.

Learners should not be forced to submit to an obligatory curriculum, or to discrimination based on whether they possess a certificate or a diploma.

If the networks I have described could emerge, the educational path of each student would be his own to follow, and only in retrospect would it take on the features of a recognizable program. The wise student would periodically seek professional advice: assistance to set a new goal, insight into difficulties encountered, choice between possible methods. Even now, most persons would admit that the important services their teachers have rendered them are such advice or counsel, given at a chance meeting or in a tutorial. Pedagogues, in an unschooled world, would also come into their own, and be able to do what frustrated teachers pretend to pursue today. To rely for true intellectual leadership on the desire of gifted people to provide it is obviously necessary even in our society, but it could not be made into a policy now. We must first construct a society in which personal acts themselves reacquire a value higher than that of making things and manipulating people. In such a society exploratory, inventive, creative teaching would logically be counted among the most desirable forms of leisurely "unemployment."

If schools ceased to be compulsory, teachers who find their satisfaction in the exercise of pedagogical authority in the classroom would be left only with pupils who were attracted by their style. The disestablishment of our present professional structure could begin with the dropping out of the schoolteacher.

[T]he educational revolution [will] be guided by certain goals:

1. To liberate access to things by abolishing the control which persons and institutions now exercise over their educational values.

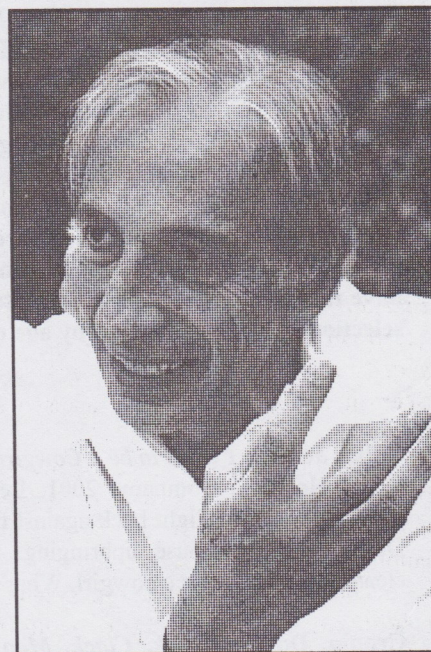
2. To liberate the sharing of skills by guaranteeing freedom to teach or exercise them on request.

3. To liberate the critical and creative resources of people by returning to individual persons the ability to call and hold meetings—an ability now increasingly monopolized by institutions which claim to speak for the people.

4. To liberate the individual from the obligation to shape his expectations to the services offered by any established profession—by providing him with the opportunity to draw on the experience of his peers and to entrust himself to the teacher, guide, adviser, or healer of his choice.

Inevitably the deschooling of society will blur the distinctions between economics, education, and politics on which the stability of the present world order and the stability of nations now rest.

## Ivan Illich



### Obit: Ivan Illich

Unreconstructed still bitterly  
belligerently for peace & love the saving remnant  
COME OUT take up your crosses ye  
martyrs of ZeroWork.

It was a military defeat  
the programme was never implemented  
images snarfed & barfed like a Retreat  
from Moscow that's dragged on for 40 years.  
Repent. The plain of light stretches relentlessly  
in all directions: an air-conditioned crucifixion  
for Dr Don Ivan Illich of Cuernavaca  
the anarcho-Monseigneur who  
dreamed in Latin &  
never went on TV.

—PLW



**W**e're certain that most anarchists can remember at least one book that first introduced them to anti-authoritarianism, political engagement, gender-role-bending, or other topics of lasting importance. But such books are hard to find amid the morass of boring, mainstream kid-lit that reinforces the same capitalist and authoritarian values which are fed to adults (can you say "Disney"?). Here, then, we present a highly subjective and idiosyncratic guide to some of the best work out there. Undoubtedly, we've left off your favorite author; we're sorry, and we meant to check with you before we wrote this, but there are thousands of great children's books out there, and our guide could easily have taken up the whole of this issue if we'd let it. Our selection is ordered, loosely, by age of target reader.

**Willis, Jeanne.** *I Want to be a Cowgirl.* illus. by Tony Ross. Henry Holt and Company, 2001. Leave the city. Throw down that tea set. Fight back against the education system. Dump your penthouse upbringing. Forget cooking and cleaning, and become a cowgirl. What's so wrong with that?

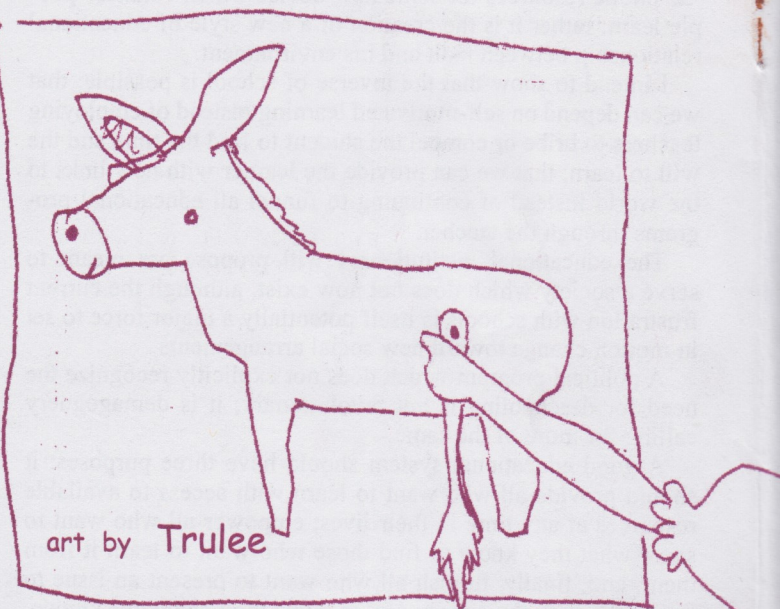
**Cronin, Doreen.** *Click, Clack, Moo : Cows That Type.* illus. By Betsy Lewin. Simon & Schuster, 2000. With factory farms and worsening conditions for farm animals worldwide, it's only a matter of time before the animals start fighting back. Actually, the wait is over. In Cronin's genius children's book Click, Clack, Moo, the animals fight back against the oppressive farmer by going on strike.

**Gosney, Joy.** *Naughty Parents.* Millbrook Press, 1999. While I don't know if the author meant the book to be explicitly political, it's anarchist in the way it portrays two parents as free souls. In *Naughty Parents*, a young girl must keep a sharp eye on her parents as they make their way through puddles, down slides, and more.

**McMullan, Kate.** *I Stink!* illus. by Jim McMullan. Joanna Cotler Books, 2002. Well, if you haven't told your little one lately about how important garbage trucks and the people who pick up your garbage are, then you better pick up this book. From dirty diapers to rotten radishes, your local garbage workers are doing the under-appreciated (and stinky) job that very few people want from dusk 'til dawn.

**Sheldon Epstein, Vivian.** *The ABCs of What a Girl Can Be.* VSE Publisher, 1980. If you knew the ABCs of what a girl can be, you'd have just a small idea of the possibilities! This is a very cute book, with retro drawings, and the wildest ideas of what a person can be when they grow up (P is for Parachutist). This is a great book to show your children what they're not learning in school—that girls kick ass!

# Learning Radical Books



**Yarbrough, Camille.** *Cornrows.* illus. by Carole Byard. Coward-McCann, Inc., 1979. This Coretta Scott King Award winner tells the story of hair in Africa and for African-Americans during slavery and to the present day through the stories of Mama and Great-grammaw. Together, they teach Sister and Brother (a.k.a. MeToo) about the power and pride of cornrows... from Robeson to Malcolm, from Richard Wright to Langston Hughes, from Mary Bethune to Aretha.

**hooks, bell.** *Happy to be Nappy.* illus. by Chris Raschka. Hyperion Books for Children, 1999. This is hooks' first children's book, and it makes the reader shiver with excitement. Children will love this book not only for its words, but for Raschka's beautiful illustrations.

**Baylor, Byrd.** *The Table Where Rich People Sit.* Illus. by Peter Parnall. Scribner's Sons, 1994. Like all of the beautifully-illustrated collaborations between Baylor and Parnall, this story teaches the value of the natural world. Unlike others, though, this one is explicit about the relative value of money and freedom, suggesting that money "shouldn't even be on a list of our kind of riches."



# Anarchy: Books for Kids

de Haan, Linda and Stern Nijland. *King and King*. Ten Speed Press, 2002. This is quite possibly the best pro-queer children's book that I have read to date. The story revolves around a prince who is forced by his mother to marry. After meeting princesses from all over the land, he finally finds his match... the brother of a visiting princess! This book is beautifully illustrated, and treats queer people as if we're normal.

Silverstein, Shel. *Lafcadio the Lion*. HarperCollins, 1963.

Lafcadio is a lion raised as a human. He learns to be a sharpshooter and eventually goes on a hunting expedition and encounters his lion kin. Forced to choose between the lions and the hunters, he puts down his gun and walks away to forge his own path.

Lindgren, Astrid. *Pippi Longstocking*. Viking Penguin, 1950. This indispensable inspiration for young anti-authoritarians features Pippi, age nine, who lives without adults and does whatever she likes because "in the whole wide world there was not a single police officer as strong as she."

Dahl, Roald. *Danny, the Champion of the World*. Knopf, 1975. A charming, less-well-known work by Dahl about a boy who lives with his father in a gypsy caravan and learns to poach pheasants. Includes a lucid, class-based defense of poaching.

Gaiman, Neil. *Coraline*. HarperTrophy, 2003. While Gaiman's charmingly scary children's book is not explicitly political, his protagonist's survival depends on her unwillingness to trust self-proclaimed authority figures and her trust in her own intuition and agenda.

Pinkwater, D. Manus. *Lizard Music*. Yearling, 1976. In quintessential Pinkwater style, Lizard Music skewers cultural sacred cows left and right. The protagonist finds himself embroiled in marvelous adventures by rejecting all received truth in order to think for himself.

Bartoletti, Susan Campbell. *Kids on Strike!* Houghton Mifflin, 1999. A history of labor conditions and labor resistance a century ago. Both an excellent introduction to labor issues and movements and a paean to the possibility of political engagement by young people. Includes wonderful photos as well.

Tolan, Stephanie S. *Welcome to the Ark*. Morrow Junior Books, 1996. The first in a trilogy following four kids who are involuntarily committed to a youth "rehabilitation" center because of their inability to fit into or accept society. This book poignantly portrays, among many other things, the abuse of power in the mental health system, the importance of communication with the land, and the devaluing of kids in our society.

Allende, Isabel. *City of the Beasts*. HarperCollins, 2002. A wonderfully written book for adolescents that denounces the rapacity of those who want to destroy the Amazon rain forest by exploiting its riches for profit, killing any of the Native population that interferes with their plans. Very funny at times, the book never preaches and the reader learns about the Native peoples and the problems they're confronted with through the eyes of a 15 year old boy who unwillingly accompanies his eccentric photographer grandmother on a magazine expedition.

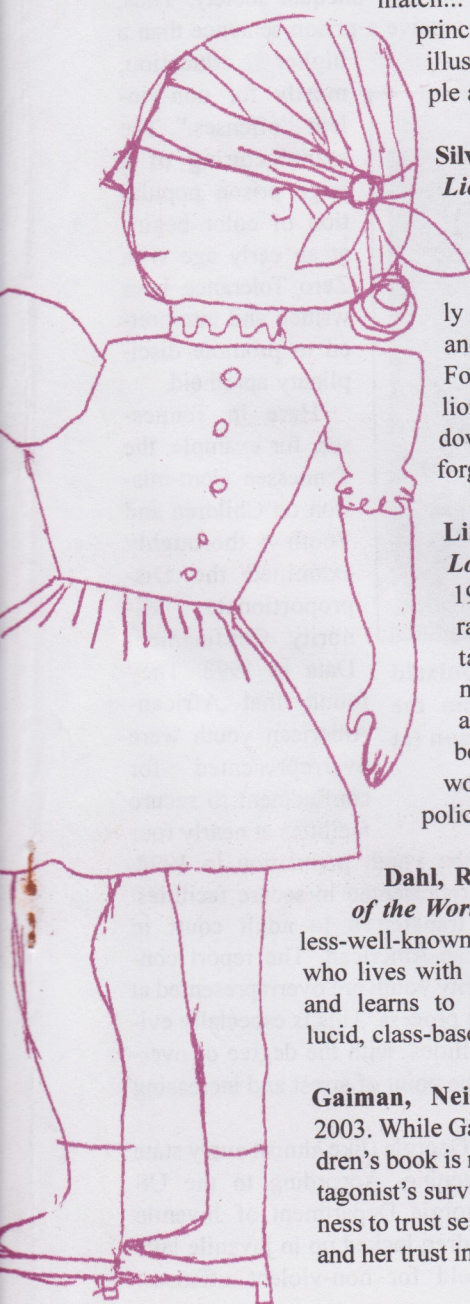
Llewellyn, Grace. *The Teenage Liberation Handbook*. Lowry House, 1991. Very possibly the most radical book on this list, this fiery guide encourages kids to really think for themselves, drop out of school, and start making their own decisions once and for all.

Some material we omitted (with great gnashing of teeth) includes: Dr. Seuss (our hero!), Lewis Carroll (our other hero!), James Loewen's *The Truth About Columbus*, and the now tragically-out-of-print *Suzuki Bean and Radical Red*.

For more info on these and other great radical kidlit, see Radym's online bibliography at <http://leep.lis.uiuc.edu/publish/asdavis/RadicalParents/RadicalChildren.html>.

Special thanks to the Anarchist Librarians mailing list and the *Fifth Estate* collective for their fine suggestions.

—Egg Syntax & Radym





# Segregation Rising and the Strategy to Leave Children Behind

While attending a meeting in Gainesville, Georgia to learn about the horrific effects of environmental racism, the conversation quickly turned to education. For decades African Americans have been fighting pollution and coping with obscene leukemia rates in their community in this city of 25,000 residents. That day, they vented about the local public school system and the intensification of segregation in schools. They know segregation is a device designed to limit their community's access to the tools and services needed to have a decent life..

The public school system in Selma, Alabama is now about 95% African-American with white parents putting their children in private schools. In Charlotte, N.C.—a city that once used bussing to integrate its schools—only about half of the schools are now considered diverse, down from a high of nearly 90 percent in the 1980s. More than 1 in 3 Latino students attends a school with minority enrollment of more than 90 percent—a ratio that compares with that for black students. These trends are not limited to the South; white parents in places like Lynn, Massachusetts have hired lawyers to fight desegregation, arguing against the desirability of diversity. Nearby Boston, the city infamous for the anti-bussing madness in the 1970's, remains a segregated mess.

Fifty years after the Brown v. Board of Education ruling against school segregation, the racism that still dominates the United States has found plenty of ways to turn the clocks back. Whites have sought and won numerous court rulings against integration, used white flight to avoid exposing their kids to children of color, placed children in white supremacist private schools and home school environments, successfully fought "multiculturalism," used violence and intimidation, manipulated disciplinary rules to help white students get ahead, and even boldly declare white-only space, such as the white-only prom held a few years ago in Georgia.

A Harvard Civil Rights Project report sums up the toll; "The vast majority of intensely segregated minority schools face conditions of concentrated poverty, which are powerfully related to unequal educational opportunity. Students in segregated minority schools face conditions that students in segregated white schools seldom experience." According to Gary Orfield,

Co-Director of the Project, "Segregation and discrimination are not relics of the past and are not benign. Blacks and Latinos in segregated schools struggle in environments of concentrated poverty, with fewer certified teachers and lower educational achievement."

**"Schools are still like prisons, because we don't learn how to live"—Arlo Guthrie**

Segregation is merely one tool of an educational system based on maintaining white supremacy. Criminalization through punishment and confinement are important components of furthering a separate and unequal society. Thus, Black men are more likely to receive a prison sentence than a

higher education, mostly for non-violent "offenses." The manufacturing of a large prison population of color begins at an early age with Zero Tolerance laws written and interpreted to promote disciplinary apartheid.

Here in Tennessee, for example, the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth thoroughly examined the Disproportionate Minority Confinement Data in 1998. They found that African-American youth were overrepresented for confinement to secure facilities at nearly four

times their representation in the youth population in 1998. White youths were never overrepresented in secure facilities. Eighty percent of juveniles transferred to adult court in Tennessee in 1995 were African-American. The report concludes, "Without a doubt, minority youth are overrepresented at all stages of the juvenile justice process. This is especially evident in secure-confinement facilities, with the degree of overrepresentation being lowest at the point of arrest and increasing at each subsequent stage."

The situation in neighboring Georgia (like almost every state in the country) is also frightening. According to the US Department of Justice and Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice records, 75% of the children locked up in juvenile jails across the state are being held for non-violent offenses.



**Photo: Cassie Shook. Urban Public School Reality: this dilapidated structure has teetered for a few years, only fifty feet from the fenced-in playground of Detroit's Dewey Center for Education (at Martin Luther King and the John Lodge Freeway.**



Although African Americans constitute less than 25% of the state's population, 65% of the kids locked up are African American males. The schools in Georgia's youth jails aren't accredited, so the young, school-age inmates continue to fall behind academically. Worst yet, while confined, these children are subjected to physical abuse, rape and other mistreatment that the federal government has called "egregious and unconstitutional".

While non-violent offenses constitute an undue proportion of punishment, Black students who have fought back to defend themselves from pervasive violence and intimidation in schools have been disproportionately punished and labeled "violent" in a culture that thrives on nightly TV infotainment "news" broadcasts portraying non-whites as violent. Students facing racism in schools have a more difficult time focusing on learning. This spring, while traveling in rural Kentucky, I came across a story about white students passing out pro-slavery propaganda in their high schools such as "Federal Nigger Hunting Licenses". A student who said African Americans constantly face such intimidation which make getting through such high schools extremely difficult reportedly shoved a white student who was passing out such abhorrent papers. For his "fighting" he was expelled from school, while the white student who also fought received only three days suspension.

Black students are also more likely to be segregated out after receiving disproportionate diagnoses of mental illnesses. When compared with their white counterparts, African American children were almost three times more likely to be labeled "mentally retarded," according to a paper by Thomas B. Parrish, managing research scientist at the American Institutes of Research.

Discrimination continues as students get older and try to navigate higher education. The backlash against affirmative action has whittled away the one remedy that began to address inequality in education. In Washington and California, "minority" enrollment in universities has declined sharply in recent years thanks to racist propositions passed by voters. Meanwhile, legacy policies that grant easier enrollment to privileged children of alumni help the underachievers like George W. Bush who would not have otherwise been able to attend Yale. Similarly, tens of thousands of immigrants are denied access to higher education through legal obstacles. The proposed Dream Act seeks to help remedy this, but it faces opposition from racist politicians.

As higher education costs have skyrocketed, class discrimination has made access even harder for non-whites. Statistics portray economic realities of a society that has never been "separate, but equal." The net worth of a white family is more than eight times greater than an African American family; compared to Latinos, it is 27 times higher. Nearly ¾ of whites own their homes; for African Americans and Latinos, less than 50% do. Discriminatory lending and employment practices continue. 40 years ago Blacks earned 55 cents to the white dollar; today, despite the civil rights movement and political pressure for change, that figure has only increased to 57 cents.

While running for Congress in 1964, George Bush Senior's

comments summed up the barely veiled plans of the ruling class to undermine the efforts of every freedom ride and attempt to end white supremacy. He said "the new Civil Rights Act was passed to protect 14% of the population; I'm worried about the other 86%." It is no surprise that the response to integration by the white supremacist establishment was to evolve new forms of segregation. The country was founded on genocide and built on the backs of slaves who were denied access to education. Bush the 2nd touts No Child Left Behind and trots out his token people of color in his cabinet to pretend he wants education for all, but like his other Orwellian programs he is really continuing the historical imperative of the white supremacist capitalist system to keep people of color undereducated.

Of course there have been improvements in the US: officially, "whites only" signs have come down. Gains have been won through intense struggle and bloodshed. Film, music, theater, literature and other cultural expressions challenge racism. Some schools even acknowledge something called Black History. Yet the statistics cited above reflect a society determined to maintain segregation and an underclass.

### Fighting a Racist Education System Starts with Fighting Racism

Challenging the laws, attitudes, and economic disparity that are the cornerstones of a white supremacist education system are crucial. Yet this is different than concluding that all people of color want to be integrated into such a system. It is important to break down barriers to educational access while also recognizing that respect for communities' self-determination goes hand in hand with supporting those who choose not to integrate into a racist system. As slavery and Jim Crow laws demanded revolts and solidarity from people of conscience, so does institutionalized racism and persistent segregation call for outrage and support for people of color who seek basic survival—food, health care, shelter, education, etc.—for their communities free from police repression and hate.

For white folks like me, this necessitates breaking from our addiction to the white world we were born in. It means constantly evaluating activism through lenses that illuminate whether we are undermining or upholding white supremacy. It means recognizing defensiveness we feel when challenged and learning to transform it into a force of revolutionary change. It does not mean we abandon anarchism for a progressive reformism based in public institutions. It doesn't necessarily mean joining the school board or supporting questionable institutions without question. However it probably means living with some contradictions in our politics. At times, choosing to be an ally is more important than maintaining ideological purity.

For me, desegregation begins with decolonizing my own consciousness and continuing education. The more self-critical, anti-racist, and aware the education, the better prepared I am to assist in struggles to challenge white supremacy in all its obscene forms of domination. — MaxZine Weinstein



# Forget about theories— learn about the practice

*We received a healthy and diverse batch of articles that attempted to examine the practical application of unschooling theories. While we cannot confirm by any first-hand experience what any of the authors say in the four subsequent pieces, they represent a sample of the best essays we received that attempted to "live the critique." Many in our collective were humbled and inspired by the examples offered from so many different cultures*

**A**narchist practice in education is emerging throughout the world, but it tends to describe itself as "democratic" to avoid the negative reaction which the word "anarchist" so often arouses. The name of the annual International Democratic Education Conference (IDEC) was chosen by the two fourteen-year-old girls who ran the fifth conference which was held at Sands School in England in 1997. They didn't like the name, but they couldn't think of a better one, and it has stuck.

IDECs have been held in Austria, England, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, Ukraine and the USA, and in 2004 and 2005 they will be in India and Germany.

A few free school examples that exist around the world will give an idea of their variety and the degree to which they differ from the conventional model.

Tokyo Shure, in Japan, which was founded in 1985 and has now expanded to three different sites, is a school for school-refusers. That means that if you are enrolled there you do not have to go. It is open all day and you turn up when you want to and leave when you want to.

The Fundación Educativa Pestalozzi, in Ecuador, was founded in 1979 and is still going strong, with about 200 students between the ages of 3 and 18. The staff are not allowed to teach, explain, guide, motivate, persuade, anticipate or point things out; the staff is responsive rather than directive. Every choice must be left to the individual child.

Lumiar, in Sao Paulo, Brazil, was founded early in 2003 with 24 pupils, and within its first year doubled in size. According to its founders' text-books, vacations, rules, buildings and classrooms are obsolete.

Butterflies—in Delhi, India—is an organization for street and working children. The Butterflies educators work on the streets and in the markets and the street children who come to them learn to read and write and to assert their rights. Although time with the educators means a reduction in their earnings, which average only 30 rupees (90 cents) a day, about 800 children come regularly.

Room 13, in Fort William, Scotland, is an art room attached to a normal primary school, for children up to age 11. The children take complete charge of all arrangements, from the buying of materials and secretarial work to the appointment and payment of staff. In 2004 they raised £200,000 (about \$360,000) to

enable them to teach other people about their ideas.

Seliba sa Boithutu, in Lesotho is just a quiet, comfortable place to study, offering materials, computers and editorial help. Learners decide what, when, and how much to learn. The annual membership fee is about US \$3 and the fee for users is about twenty cents per day.

There are many similar schools in the USA. The best known is Sudbury Valley School in Massachusetts, which has been widely imitated. Sudbury is at one end of the spectrum in its refusal even to suggest a curriculum of any kind, and at the other end in the way the school community insists on a list of rules governing behavior.

There are so-called "democratic" educational institutions with total or deliberately limited authority, rules and no rules, punishments and no punishments, timetables and no timetables, compulsory attendance and voluntary attendance, buildings and no buildings. They may be for those who can afford fees or for the utterly deprived, in cities or out in the country, in the prosperous parts of the West or in areas of great poverty. What distinguishes them all from conventional schools is a total respect for the dignity of the child. While adults may excel in size, experience, and knowledge, children's strengths may lie in empathy, originality, imagination and energy. Regardless of these differences and because of the egalitarian context, children and adults conduct their affairs as equals.

Many more examples of such experimentation can be found at [www.idenetwork/member.html](http://www.idenetwork/member.html). Web sites for some of the organizations described in this article are: [www.shure.or.jp](http://www.shure.or.jp), [www.lumiar.org.br](http://www.lumiar.org.br), [www.room13scotland.com](http://www.room13scotland.com), [www.ssb.org.ls](http://www.ssb.org.ls), [www.sudval.org](http://www.sudval.org). David Gribble's books, *Real Education: Varieties of Freedom*, published in 1998 and *Lifelines*, due out in September 2004, both published in England by Libertarian Education, give detailed accounts of many such schools and organizations.

—David Gribble

## RECLAIMING OUR FREEDOM TO LEARN: THE UNIVERSIDAD DE LA TIERRA

**T**hey came from villages and barrios as naïve refuseniks, mostly indigenous, who were fed up with the classroom. They came with curiosity, rather than conviction. They had heard about Universidad de la Tierra from friends or acquaintances and decided to give it a try. The cost of the whole adventure is ridiculously low, almost irrelevant.

Most of the 'students', however, require support for food and lodging, since they are away from their communities during



their learning process. This has been a limiting factor, preventing us from accepting all the 'students' that apply to Unitierra.

They knew that we have no teachers or curricula and do not provide State-approved educational services. But they loved the idea that they would be in full control of their own learning: the content, the rhythm, the conditions.

But it was not easy for them to take such control into their own hands—even those who had suffered school for only a few years already had been conditioned to be passive receptacles of official instruction. That would change as they started to work with a tutor, a person doing what they want to learn and who is willing to accept them as apprentices.

In doing their work, in observing their tutors, the 'students' usually discover how they might make better use of books. As apprentices with an agrarian lawyer, for example, they observe how his work refers to articles of agrarian law, and from seeing this put into practical terms, are led by their curiosity to

that little book full of strange legal sentences. At their request, a reading circle then starts, where several 'students' study agrarian law together. They also discover that they need specific skills. Most of the time, they get those skills through repeated practice, but they may ask to attend specific workshops in order to shorten the time needed to obtain those skills.

Simply said, what we are doing at Unitierra is reclaiming the practice of apprenticeship, a model as old as the hills, and complementing it with some contemporary practices for shared learning and study. In defining areas of apprenticeship, we work with the communities to discover both the kind of knowledge or skills that are not available to them and the kind of learning that they would want for their young people.

We have seminars that freely explore a theme of common interest (the number of participants in every session varies from 6 to 25). Someone may suggest a specific text pertinent to an overarching theme, and in the next session, we organize the conversation around what we have read. We also organize special seminars to accommodate the ideas of an interesting visitor who may have something to share. The speaker speaks for 40 minutes and all the participants discuss the subject with him or her for the next hour or two.

A regular seminar of ours focused on the ideas of Iván Illich. We have been investigating how he may or may not have effectively articulated our lives at the grassroots. We use a selection of his texts to frame our own experience. The seminar has been very fruitful and has sharpened the consciousness of participants.

Our 'students' have been learning faster than we expected. Some of them are combining different lines of learning in a creative way—one of them, for example, combined organic agriculture and soil regeneration (his original interest) with vernacular architecture. Through exposure to a variety of learning environments and work with tutors, he has enriched and extended what it is that a hardworking peasant usually does.

After just a few months, they start to be called back to their

communities to put into practice what they have learned at Unitierra; instead of producing and selling professional services in order to secure dignity, they understand that sharing what they have learned with the community can be even more gratifying.

We consciously manipulate the symbols of the oppressive educational system—after one or two years of successful learning, the 'students' earn a fancy university diploma to provide 'social recognition' that has been denied to them by the official educational system.

Unlike conventional university diplomas that are awarded to those achieving a certain number of ass-in-the-seat hours, we certify a specific competence that is more immediately appreciated by the communities. We are also extending similar diplomas to wise people who may never have been in a school or our university. Their competence is certified by their peers and the community. The idea, again, is to ridicule and appropriate

**They came from villages and barrios as naïve refuseniks, mostly indigenous, who were fed up with the classroom.**

the symbols of the dominant system.

In the Unitierra adventure, we use the analogy of a tree. In recent years, indigenous peoples have been repeating an old saying: "They wrenched off our fruits... They ripped off our branches... They burned our trunk... But they could not kill our roots." The foliage represents the visible aspect of a culture, its morphology. The trunk, part visible and part invisible, represents the structural aspect. And the roots represent their myths, their view of the world, their notion of the self, space, time, spirituality.

The tree of culture may have grafts—something brought by another culture that became fully incorporated. The Spaniards, for example, brought the plow that is now an intimate part of our peasant cultures. But in order to flourish, a graft should be of the same species and it must be grafted in an unobtrusive way. In the communities there are also many alien elements that cannot be grafted—they may decide to keep them and use them with a critical distance in their own way, or they may decide to reject them entirely as something damaging.

The school is often the first example mentioned by the participants when we discuss such alien elements. They remember that three years ago, in a public forum of the indigenous peoples of Oaxaca, after months of reflection and discussion, they declared: "The school has been the main tool of the State to destroy the indigenous cultures."

We are learning together, with these young and old people who have been designated by indigenous communities' assemblies as a participant in this adventure of "reflection in action." We are learning how to regenerate our own cultures.

We are hospitably opening our arms and hearts to others, but fully aware that we need to protect our own cultural trees from inhospitable people, and the tools and practices that corrupt or kill them. We are thus healing from the damages done to us by colonization and development. And we are joyfully walking again our own path, trusting again our own noses, dreaming again our own dreams... —Gustavo Esteva



# Learning, Unlearning, Defining, Redefining

## The IDSP experience

**M**odernity is an age of gadgets, where things are created and destroyed, not in years but in seconds, where stances change, but where social change itself is an unthinkable phenomenon. The world is divided into developed and underdeveloped, and people are valued not for what they produce but as commodities, where learning is merely schooling and where dissent is sophisticatedly controlled. The weapons of subjugation are clever, and information overload is persistent. The destinies of people are determined behind closed doors. The global development is need of the market and the market drives the lives of the people.

This article seeks to present a humble effort in a remote, largely unknown place of the world. This effort can be seen in the exuberance of a group of people that created the Institute for Development Studies and Practices

(IDSP), a place where they can demystify the development practices, challenge the power structures, and work with communities to exhale a fresh breath of air, outside the poisonous, uni-cultural worldview.

Arthuro Escobar, in his legendary work *Encountering Development*, questions "why did the industrialized nations of North America and Europe come to be seen as the appropriate models of post-World War II societies in Africa, Asia and Latin America?" How did the postwar discourse on development actually create the so called Third World?"

Community mobilization, community development, community empowerment, gender equity, poverty eradication, etc. are the fundamental slogans of any mainstream development discourse. The Institute for Development Studies and Practices IDSP-Pakistan was conceived with recognition of fundamental dichotomies in the slogan and practice of these words. In the 1940s, US President Harry Truman made "underdevelopment" a keystone in U.S. foreign policy, and today, the "developed" nations are dedicated to helping their "underdeveloped" neighbors. But who benefits from "development"? Who among us does not worry when the leaders of "First World" tell us they have a "strategy" for solving society's "problems"?

Comprehensive mechanisms work to devise new slogans: interchangeable, meaningless words like "Development", "Project", "Strategy", "Problem" continuously suppress, oppress, and repress people using the jugglery of words. Using

moral terms, they claim to "fight against poverty," which is an abstract effort; one can fight against greed or injustice, but how can one fight against something that so intangible?

IDSP-Pakistan was created witnessing stark dichotomies in actions and practices at all levels. We now understood that the game of development benefits the West and elites of Asian and African countries. To contest this, the Institute was established to encourage youth who would understand the politics and meaning of development from the community to the globe. Hopefully, these youth can then contribute, devising means for self-driven, self-motivated, and self-generated models to regain

and regenerate the indigenous values, practices, processes and repressed knowledge based on local wisdom, folk literature, and folklore.

The fundamentals behind the organization was the belief--based on research, personal experiences, extended study of development, school-

ing, and media--that the dominant development notions ignore the richness of people's knowledge, wisdom and creativity. IDSP thus denies the colonial logic of dominant development practices of modernity and education (schooling), and then moves towards redefining the context and perspective of development and education (schooling), blending theory and practice.

The Institute engages with people based on three interrelated thematic areas: (1) understanding the colonial and imperial history of development; (2) learning and unlearning through the radical education and critical pedagogy; and (3) building self-esteem through the rich analysis and factual representation of culture, spirituality and social change. The Institute is a place to read some books, have generative discussions, and discuss difficult situations in a congenial, self disciplined manner. We discuss Chomsky, Freire, Michael Apple, Edward Said, Iqbal, Michel Foucault, Howard Zinn, Iqbal Ahmed, Gandhi, Ali Shariati, Ivan Illich, and other prominent dissidents.

We learn from radical, regenerative thoughts in literature, folk songs and religion. Work with communities follows exposure to radical thoughts, with emphasis on the power and richness of cultural heritage. The essence is that a country (Pakistan) which had military rule for more than half of its life, which suffers from imperialism, where the elite are the intellectuals, the nation is demoralized, yet a place where all variations of season are pervasive, where abundance of fruit of all

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**IDSP is only the means to greater possibilities of hope, resistance to injustice, inequality, and global tyranny through humility, trust, justice, truth, love, care, mutual accountability, and transparency.**

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variety is produced, where civilizations of more than five thousand years exist, which used to have one of the best irrigation systems, where the learning was part and parcel of lives of people. Yet this place has been dehumanized, deteriorated, and demolished in less than three hundred years.

These vast discrepancies in what is true and what is not were made possible by blending some very powerful ingredients. The first was to eliminate the sources of inspiration for the people that is their language. An elite language was not only introduced but other languages were systematically given sub-status. English speakers were accorded more value, would appear literate and considered modern. The other way came through the introduction of factory schooling, starting with a few missionary schools, but then becoming role models and structurally damaging the indigenous learning mechanisms at all levels in all fields.

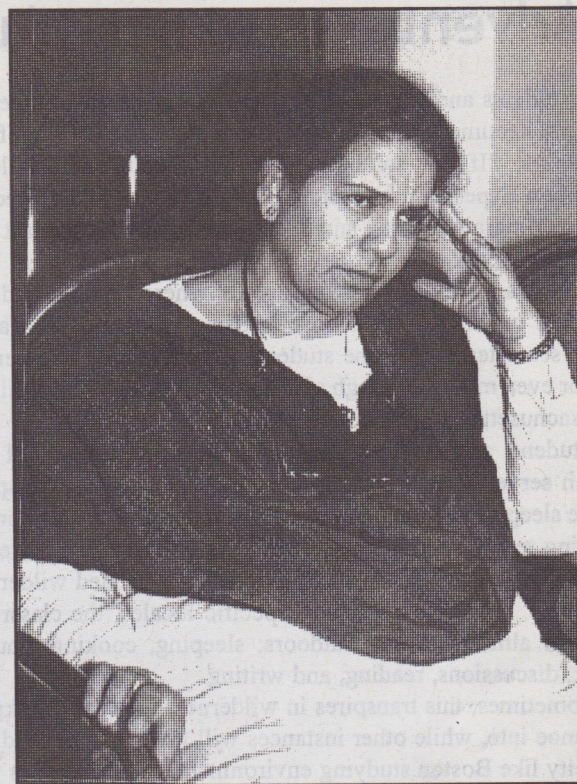
IDSP did something interesting, radical if we may call it, bringing the youth from nooks and crannies of Pakistan into a generative learning discourse. The Institution teaches its analysis, focusing on understanding the North's invasion of the South, starting from the first ships that left Spain for trade purposes to the colonization of this part of the world to the current post colonial era. Studying the understanding of the presumably visible institutions of oppression, military regimes, economic institutions and institutions of schooling, media, and academia that use the platform of morality are questioned and synthesized.

The systemic analysis of schooling is prerequisite for moving towards regeneration of indigenous energies and regaining the lost wisdom of indigenous knowledge. The first question will be whether school is omnipresent. How to ridicule school? Should we reform schools? When this question is further processed, the question of an alternative looms large, as if the replacement of Coca Cola with Pepsi or some other black, fizzy drink changes anything.

If only we could understand that without modern institutions but communities, people have survived through the ages of history, nurtured the organisms, valued nature, and lived with the understanding that nature is their friend. The notions of mother land and numerous folk stories depict that the love with nature was prevalent through all societies. The question then arises, What is IDSP? Are we a movement or an institution? The answer is simple and complex: "IDSP is an open learning space, which is independent of conventional, dominant definitions of institutions, structures, therefore the actions, practices and people in it define it naturally and organically".

The culture that exists in this part of the world is the source of inspiration for all, especially the youth. The school has only managed to blur the image. Once this blur is rectified then people start understanding the bigger picture and then based on their vision, the prevalent but obscure wisdom starts appearing. IDSP as a place has always been in continuous transformation, construction and deconstruction.

For the last six years, it has created structures based on a formal understanding of institutions and deconstructed them. It developed programs, questioned them, and recreated programs.



IDSP Founder Dr. Quratulain Bakhteari

## What resistance is to life, life is to resistance.

Working with people is like moving along a stream, the way the stream changes its course, so does the traveler. The discourses of religion, culture, and literature are considered to be alien to mainstream development. But the people's inspiration, their thought processes, and their lives are embedded in these. IDSP manages to include these and many others in the learning discourses to understand and question the formal notions.

IDSP is only the means to greater possibilities of hope, resistance to injustice, inequality, and global tyranny through humility, trust, justice, truth, love, care, mutual accountability, and transparency. When we ask why all the dissidents don't just start a movement against the repression and subjugation, the answer is complex and difficult, but some clue however could be found in Orwell's *Animal Farm*: what resistance is to life, life is to resistance.

Noam Chomsky reminds us: "If you assume that there is no hope, you guarantee that there will be no hope. If you assume that there is an instinct for freedom, that there are opportunities to change things, there is a possibility that you can contribute to making a better world. That's your choice"

—by Ali Naqvi



## Adventures with the Audubon Expedition Institute

Students and teachers live, sleep, eat, and travel together. A handmade bumper sticker hangs on the ceiling of one bus, "If the students lead, the faculty will follow." Audubon Expedition Institute (AEI) is a radical and accredited college program where I taught as field faculty for the last four and a half years.

AEI is a traveling college program, where students and faculty live together in an intense learning community for a 13-week semester, with some students attending for three semesters or even more. Although affiliated with Lesley University in Massachusetts, we do not have a campus.

Students and faculty alike travel in a modified school bus, which serves as transportation, storage, and central metaphor, while sleeping outdoors in open air or in tents. Students cook in rotating teams on a propane stove. The faculty not only teaches, they also drive the bus and practice any needed wilderness medicine. Aside from visits to specific locales, the classroom remains almost entirely outdoors: sleeping, cooking, coursework, discussions, reading, and writing.

Sometimes, this transpires in wilderness areas we backpack or canoe into, while other instances will find us immersed in a big city like Boston studying environmental justice issues with inner city youths as our teachers and guides. We learn by listening to locals, both human and non-human.

It is not only a low-tech environment, in most cases, it is no-tech. Aside from cameras and watches, most buses do not allow any sort of electronic mediation between ourselves and what's happening at the moment.

All of the learning community members, faculty and students alike, agree to go without TVs, computers, radios, or walkpersons for the short duration of the bus semesters. If one wants to write, they use a pencil and paper.

If you want to read, the bus is stocked with a 500-volume library on a variety of topics such as ecological, sustainable living, anthropology, cookbooks, plus folders full of information on specific regions we're traveling through, campgrounds, local flora and fauna, people we've met there before, and the issues they face.

For music, the bus has instruments: at least one guitar, often a banjo or mandolin, percussion instruments, and of course, all the voices that came with our bodies. We sing for fun and at times we sing ritually, such as upon leaving a special place or before a meal as a form of gratitude. I count group singing as a litmus test of community dynamics: if people spontaneously sing together during evenings or in the bus on long drives, things are going well.

There are times when students rebel against the prohibition against electronic doodads, generally at the beginning of the semester when withdrawal symptoms start to kick in. If this happens, we have a long group discussion about it, in which everyone's voice is heard and feelings are respected, although the policy does stand. This is one of the few times in many peoples' lives when they will not have their experience mediated by

technological contrivances—in the case of very young people, who've grown up with computers, it may be the first and only time.

In such a gadget-free environment, we turn to one another for resolving troubles, for entertainment, and for appreciating our inner beauty as well.

The AEI structures are remarkably egalitarian, especially when compared to most accredited university settings. Decisions are largely made by group consensus—and this skill is taught and practiced as part of the curriculum. The course holding the largest number of credits is the "Learning Communities" course, which involves decision-making, conflict resolution, group and outdoor leadership skills.

AEI relies largely on a style known as "midwife teaching," a pedagogical approach with a deep belief in the student's core wisdom, instead of cramming the assumed empty head full of outside ideas and testing the amount later. AEI students get to choose which books they read for each course, which topics they want to take charge of for the group's learning, and other individualized choices (including a third-semester group consensus project involving some form of specific activism)—where the agenda concerns nothing less than a radical shift in consciousness, towards a more ecologically sane and sustainable society.

We give each other seminars on environmental literacy, anarcho-primitivism, the alternate version of the Columbus story, the effects of globalization on fishing families off the coast of Maine, what it's like for a pig on a factory farm, the effects of cattle grazing on desert ecology, WalMart's insidious practices.

We create street theater pieces to protest globalization, or circulate petitions near outdoor stores to get them to use organic cotton. We join with local communities for contradances, hootenannies, and Native American ceremonies. We notice it getting darker at 4 pm, how it's impossible to get everything done on our schedule as the days grow shorter, and we sleep under the stars, listening to screech owls.

We also practice "service learning," moving woodpiles under shelter for the winter, digging an outhouse hole, making biodiesel, clearing brush, or killing select trees to clear land for a community center.

And, we discuss the ethical ramifications of actions like, as one student put it, "killing someone's dreams (those of the young trees we pulled up or sawed off) to help create another dream." As students and faculty discover the deep complexity of our involvement, we become the living experience of being a fully participating global citizen. —Tina Fields

**If the students lead,  
the faculty will follow**



*Walking on Water: Reading, Writing, and Revolution.* Derrick Jensen. Chelsea Green Publishing Company, 2004.

Already known to us for his indictments of civilization and chilling memoirs, Derrick Jensen takes us inside his real-life anti-classroom and relates his teaching methods in a narrative, story-telling fashion that follows his first rule of writing: Never bore the reader. Throughout, he exposes school systems as training camps teaching us, as Arthur Evans expresses, "depersonalized learning, alienation from nature and sexuality, obedience to hierarchy, fear of authority, self-objectification, and chilling competitiveness." Jensen challenges his students to start developing past these trainings.

Not only ideological and pedagogical, Jensen's text is practical. Some of the writing techniques Jensen encourages include using sensory data, playing with spatial dimensions, and creating a path of action that the reader can follow. The book's title comes from Jensen's admonition to "commit some miracles, and then write about them."

Already one of the most vital and visionary revolutionary voices currently publishing, Jensen covers new ground in this book, which could serve-joining the likes of Illich, Goodman, and Freire-as a sort of manual for aspiring anarchist educators. —Leafy

*JOYBRINGER.* magazine  
Rahula Janowski, 4104 24th  
Street, PMB 669, San  
Francisco, CA 94114.

I would call it Anarchist Mothering, but Joybringing is good, too. This is not so much militant feminism; it is more intelligently natural motherhood, which is definitely a radical view to much of our society. A subscription would be like having regular visits from an out-of-town best friend who occasionally can visit. She talks about everything, from her initial concern that some women would think worse of her for her intention pregnancy to vaccinations to men who are jealous of breast-feeding ("Now that's gross."). The first issue emphasizes attachment parenting. There is information about finding a doula, how to help prisoners with children, and statements like, "Attention: this is not a civilized country! In a civilized country, raising children would be valued!" Rahula wants feedback from radical mothers: anarchakit-ty@riseup.net —Leafy

*BABY BLOC*, Laurel, Harriet, & Myriam Dykstra, and Bruce Triggs. Guadalupe House, 1417 So. G. St, Tacoma, WA. 98405. babybloc@yahoo.com

"This zine about taking kids to demonstrations, rallies, protests, civil-disobedience actions, parades, marches, and places about that." It is full of ways to protect children while doing so, and in their general lives. There are lots of short, packed articles/pictures, like about the family who hung baby clothes on the gate of the School of the Americas (school now renamed). The mother-alls, "workwear for the REAL working class," are marvelously practical. Book reviews on titles like

*Activist Handbook for Minors* by Katya Komisaruk. I predict this zine will be popular for a long time. The front covers may even become collector's art. —Leafy

**We pledge allegiance...**



**to all-girl bands, pro choice rallies,  
witchcraft and voodoo.**

art is from the new  
*Girls Are Not Chicks*  
*Coloring Book*

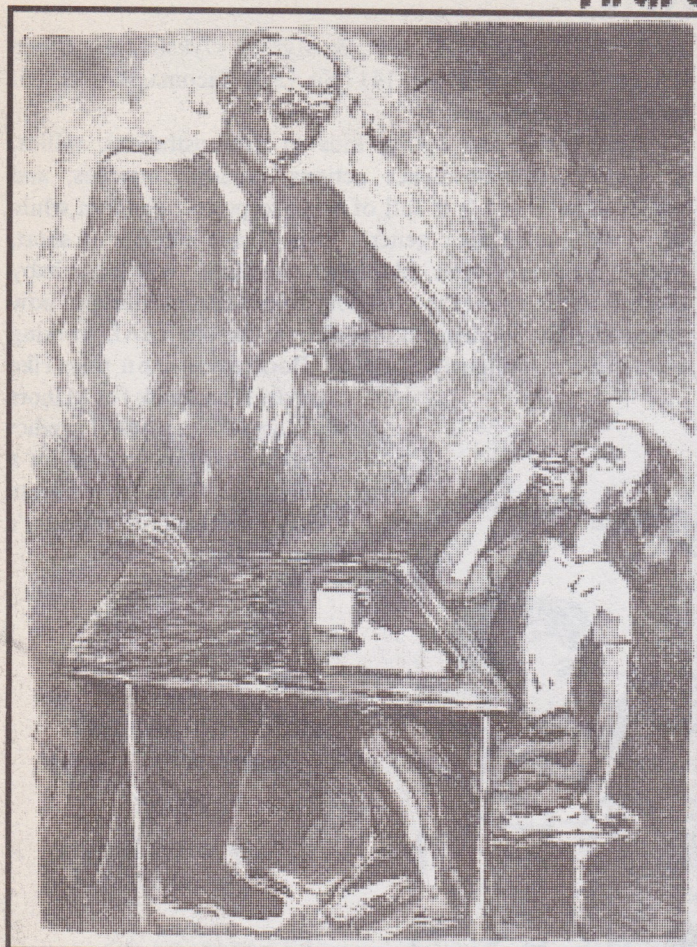
By Jacinta Brunell  
and Julie Novak

Brunell, Jacinta with Irit Reinheimer and Julie Novak  
*Girls Will Be Boys Will Be Girls Will Be... Coloring Book* and  
*Girls Are Not Chicks Coloring Book*. Self-published.  
*Girls Will Be...* available from FE Books. See page  
Jacinta Brunell's bold gestures in gender bent books for kids of  
all ages remind us of the early days of underground feminist  
publishers like Lollipop Power. More modern than the timeless  
classic *Free to Be... You and Me*, these inspired coloring  
books challenge assumptions in an unpretentious and playful  
manner, indispensable for any libertarian kids's library.

—Sunfrog

*Girls Are Not Chicks*: PO Box 325, Rosendale NY 12472





—Susan Simensky Bietila

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"The visual arts must be part of intellectual discourse. Art must not be primarily a commodity, but a means of communication. All my life the mainstream art institutions have erected hypocritical barriers separating politics from art. I welcome the opportunity to collaborate in the historical task before us—breaking through those barriers." —Susan Simensky Bietila

agitartgal@hotmail.com

Thanks to Susan for sharing the graphic at left, part of a compelling series she's done addressing issues related to education.

## Letter from a teacher

Teaching at Durfee Middle School in Detroit's inner-city, I found that most students had not been exposed to books of any kind before entering school in first grade or Kindergarten. No one read at home, not to themselves, and parents did not read to their children.

At staff meetings and informal discussions with teachers at both schools, I tried getting a teacher book discussion club going. One reason was to model enjoyment of reading to our students. I was appalled to find out that most of the teachers didn't read anything outside of school either. One year, I discovered that only one teacher out of 33 read outside of school and that for a weekly bible study class at her church.

This past spring, I found three teachers in my school who read regularly, mostly fiction. I'm going to try again next year to get a book club going.

This past year, our principal was finally enlightened and provided books for every teacher to read aloud to their classes. But prior to that, in every year since 1994, when I came back to teaching in Detroit, I have had to hide the fact that I read to my class. Principals believed there was no time nor purpose for that in the curriculum.

Several teacher friends who either live in or have visited Australia and New Zealand notice a marked difference in attitudes toward reading. They see so many people reading in public in those countries that the difference from this country stands out dramatically. For example, people frequently read books on public transportation, while waiting for the bus, and drivers usually have a book at their elbow.

Have you noticed the lack of bookstores in Detroit? There are none in either of the neighborhoods where I have taught and no easily accessible library.

Several years ago, I was appalled when Detroit's superintendent of education sent a letter to every teacher urging all 11,000 of us to vote yes on a referendum to build football and baseball stadiums in the city. He never mentioned that the same ballot would also ask voters to approve continuing a proposal for financing the public libraries. The stadium vote won and the library vote lost.

The library in my school's neighborhood was torn down a few years later when the roof fell in and was never replaced.

—Tanya





"Formic Shock" — Sas Christian

# S is for Shame, F is for Fury, M is for Mothering

by Camy Matthay

**A**s a well-educated woman who had elected to be a stay-at-home mother, I was an enigma. I wasn't into Jesus, ironing male garments, or particularly indolent. Yet my choice was perceived to reveal a flaw of character, a weakness. I was supposed to buck up and go back to work. But I just couldn't do it. That made a lot of people uncomfortable, and most of my critics wore heels. I endured, from liberals and self-identified feminists, endless variations of the question "What is a bright woman like you doing at home?" They were platitudes, ironically, meant to compliment, but shocking insofar as they implied the judgment that mothering and child rearing were occupations reserved for stupid, unambitious women.

I didn't respond well to the encouragement that I could mother at a distance or to the idea that I could trust my left hemisphere and popular culture to direct my life. I wasn't conforming to their formula for a successful life and they rewarded me by demoting me from their social tier. That stung, but when I looked at my infant son, my heart sang and I was among the Queens in the Universe.

The "suits" made me miserable—not because their agendas tempted me, but because I couldn't get them to understand where I was. How complete, correct, and natural it felt to have a baby with you all day long. In the company of the career-minded, the explanations of love and attachment I offered fell



on deaf ears. I may as well have had the flu—rather than a baby. “I would get over it,” they said. In their company, I found myself gripped with shame and a quiet fury.

I took some solace in the fact that non-parents were simply ignorant. But others did have children—some with nannies, others who were tucked away in “great” childcare facilities. “Facilities”, I would think ungraciously, their babies are in “great facilities.” I hated their smiley-face callousness. I didn’t understand them at all.

### the human rights of children

**B**eing a mother at home was hard at first. I had not expected to be so reproached or to feel so isolated. At that time, I was living in New York City where the pressure to be economically competitive was particularly intense. Sheer loneliness forced me to get over the reservations I had about meeting women whose commonality revolved around a book whose title I could barely pronounce without blushing: *The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding*. The word I kept stumbling on was not “breastfeeding”—although that was bad enough, but the word “womanly.”

All of my misgivings, however, crashed at my first La Leche League meeting. Encountering this extended tribe of caring women marked the beginning of one of the most significant chapters of my life. Over the course of a few years, these women, helped me to claim a language that dignified my life as a mother, and eventually my life as a parent of school-free children.

Just as any new language broadens meaning, this maternal one too, was altering my perception of myself my work, and society. It was a troubling lens. So many parenting practices and child-rearing conventions struck me as absurd. For example, although having pretty things to keep baby “safe” and “entertained” was prescriptive, all that hardware: bassinets, cribs, swings, play-pens, and strollers spoke to me of deprivation, of an irrevocable loss of human touch and warmth that babies require to grow best in health and happiness. It agonized me to see so many parents preoccupied with baby stuff, with their baby’s “look,” and to see them become increasingly detached from the feelings and responsibilities I was trying to uphold and to honor.

In the conversations I had with these parents who had delegated the primary task of child rearing to strangers, words like “nurturing,” “protection,” “conscientiousness,” and “perseverance” that described my daily life in the deepest ways couldn’t seem to scratch the veneer of ambition that cloaked their desire for self-importance. What they seemed to want most of all boiled down to social status and classy vacations. We full-time parents were viewed as relics, or worse, as losers. But if trying to validate the human rights of children required “losing,” then that, in fact, was what we were deliberately doing. We were walking the talk of our convictions about the emotional needs of children and modeling this simple creed of childhood: delight and liberty.

The conversations we mothers (and fathers too) had were

important. Our words validated our work, and it was a constant source of delight that as our children became increasingly verbal and self-reliant, that this language, descriptive of human relationship, began to include them—so that words like: “generosity,” “responsibility,” “forgiveness,” and “freedom” were acknowledged, defined, and redefined in our households.

### education as a conversation

**I**n my own family, this conscientiousness, as well as certain lifestyle choices (e.g., no television, nothing plastic bigger than a cabbage) bound my family together and shielded us to a great degree from Logo culture. Heedful as I was, something big and incredibly invasive was coming down the road and I didn’t catch on to it until it nearly crushed my doorstep.

As the proverb “we don’t know who discovered water, but we’re certain it wasn’t a fish” reminds us, ubiquitous parts of our environment and culture can remain invisible or transparent until we are somehow jolted out of—what we will forever after see as—our selective blindness.

One day I had such an epiphany; I crossed paths with a trio of school age children. They were unusual somehow, but I couldn’t put my finger on it right away. They were lively and engaging, and had not lost that wonderful earnestness that characterizes so many preschoolers who have strong passions. Also—and this was no small thing—they looked at you when you spoke to them.

I hadn’t met children like this before, who understood the intricacies of easy dialogue—who were naturally engaged, and so, engaging individuals themselves. Most of the children I knew made me feel unintelligible or headless—like an adult in a Calvin and Hobbs cartoon. These kids were charming, sparkling with enthusiasm, and I was completely smitten.

What were they doing out of school I wanted to know? Oh, they didn’t go to school, they explained, in fact, they had never gone to school. That this information “gave me pause” was an understatement. I had stumbled—by accident—onto the best extension of the attachment style of parenting I had been practicing for years. I was as astonished by the possibilities these joyous and inquisitive children represented as I was disturbed by the fact that I had taken for granted the inevitability of schooling my own children.

I’ve preserved that moment in my mind, defeating the tendency of time to soften its edges, because it is a reminder of my hubris, of a time when my distance from the center felt so great I believed I couldn’t be reached. I had forgotten that the kind of defensive acuity you can achieve when you withdraw from centers of influence predicates that you know where those arenas are. In this case, I hadn’t questioned the assumption that school was inevitable, much less been able to think about its necessity or purpose. Those unschooled children, however, were a measure of the difference between education as something that is done to you by someone else, and education as a conversation you have with the world where ever you are and wherever you go—throughout your whole life.

Why had I come so close to yielding to the state the power I



had to shape my children's lives? Blindness. Complicity to convention. Of course, I might have found out about home-schooling sooner if the fraction of families electing this alternative was larger than it is. According to most estimates it hovers around 2% of all families with school age children. I also might have found out about it sooner if states advertised this option as a legal alternative. But our nation's policy makers are, of course, deeply committed to the treatment of children as capital, as little economic soldiers to be crammed full of facts and sent out onto the battlefield in the best interests of the American Empire. Our nation has no interest in liberating its necessary human infrastructure or "corrupting" itself with utopian dreams.

I had been so prepared to be stoic and "cheerful" about that first day of school; it bothered my conscience for a long time. Eventually, I realized that although our society will grudgingly accept the idea of a mother committed to her infants, the conventional expectation is that she will ultimately be enormously relieved to wave good-bye at the big yellow bus so she can resume her "real" life in the market place. All the government propaganda that sweepingly claims it takes two incomes to raise a family supports this idea. Most of the women and men I knew who received the same training I did to join the ranks of the professional class (I abandoned) support this idea. And they often support this idea despite the fact that an economically unjustifiable portion of their income simply goes back into the overhead of their jobs, and what is leftover, in millions of dollars every year, goes into the binge of irresponsibility and indulgence, raping and wasting, that is euphemistically referred to as "shopping."

Blind to the larger moral issues, their children are warehoused and socialized to accept capitalistic orthodoxy, including: the "necessity" of being taught in order to be educated; the "inevitability" of competition; that schools are equitable conveyor belts for ambition and mobility; that academic pedigrees are the locus of social status; that making money is an adequate goal for life's work; and that consuming the world will compensate for the loss of freedom and ways of living that they have left unexplored.

In the last decade that I've been unschooling my children, people—especially parents of schoolchildren—have always been interested in knowing why my husband and I have not sent our children to school. I can usually tailor a response to pique their interest and sometimes garner more than a modicum of respect. But, I rarely say what I really want to say, i.e., that the whole educational system is flawed to the core because it necessarily cripples the social consciousness of children. Indeed, the sort of persons that are socialized within the current educational establishment are often so inculcated with exaggerated competitive attitudes and with the idea that individual material

gain is the best measure of "success", that they are unable to imagine a world organized much differently... I no longer ask these parents the comparable question: "Why are you sending your child to school?" because to our mutual embarrassment they so often have no idea.

### **the loss of maternal thinking and behavior**

**F**or a long time now, the state, in collusion with corporations, has been supporting the wholesale relinquishment of child rearing to institutions and capitalistic agendas. Given that all thinking is rooted in and shaped by the activities in which people engage, I believe one thing our society is increasingly suffering from is the loss of maternal thinking and behavior—and I say "maternal" without intending to deny for one minute that mothering work, with the exception of breastfeeding, is as suitable to men as it is to women.

The world could be organized for human happiness, beauty, biodiversity, community, cooperation, and freedom. But to the extent that people retain their associations and dependence on institutions and ideologies that preoccupy them with money, acquisition, and power, I worry that the entire globe will be reduced to the vocabulary and currency of economics, and that other languages with far greater altruistic content—like the maternal one I've been speaking—will be

increasingly demeaned as subjective opinions, "fashions," or "tastes" of no social consequence at all.

Those of us who have assumed the responsibilities of caring for children full time and live deliberately at the periphery of mainstream society know a great deal about another kind of life. That knowledge is powerful because its standing rests in the continuum of the human biological experience. We can state our position very clearly: the day-to-day raising of children, the sensitivity, flexibility, resourcefulness, and patience it entails, offers a generous blueprint for the kind of work that needs to be done to build a better world . . . a world, for example, filled with many more people who can conduct their lives with love and compassion for others, and who are seriously concerned to secure for all, the necessities and advantages that they seek for themselves.

Remember what Che Guevara said: A good radical education is about loving people first and wanting for them what you want for yourself.

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**For more on the artist who painted, "Formic Shock",  
see her website at [www.hotboxdesigns.com](http://www.hotboxdesigns.com)**

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# Deschooling the Deschoolers and Unschooling my Illusions

**S**chooling in an authoritarian society is often demeaning and determined to inculcate ignorance and obedience. When schooling fails, we deem it a social disaster. But without a viable alternative, the subversion that sneaks inside the doors and out from under the rugs—thanks largely to autonomous students, radical parents, and anti-authoritarian teachers—might partially redeem public schooling for now.

Deschooling can be a process and not a place. But if it is a process only available to those of race privilege and class comfort, then the place matters. If deschooling society only takes place on the rural fringes and in the suburban co-ops, it is liberation only for the liberals, free schools for the children of economic freedom.

Clearly, a free school movement beginning in the cities and based on neighborhood and community control of learning spaces suggests the potential for liberation. But if the free school does not emerge due to lack of like-minded comrades and limited economic means, if the private school costs too much, if the public school requires uniforms and is run by cops pretending to be football coaches, what are radical parents to do? Rather than subject their children to the manifold humiliations of the kid prison known as “regular school,” many families choose autonomous home-schooling or unschooling in relative isolation from other families or the larger community.

In his book *Alternative Schools* (a 1980s revision of a 1970s book called *Free Schools*), Jomathan Kozol levies a rigorous indictment on the rural, commune-and-homestead-based, free-school movement.

“In my belief, an isolated upper-class rural Free School for the children of the white and rich within a land like the United States and in a time of torment such as 1972 is a great deal too much like a sandbox for the children of the SS guards at Auschwitz. [ . . . ] At best, in my belief, these schools are obviating pain and etherizing evil; at worst, they constitute a registered escape valve for political rebellion. Least conscionable is when the people who are laboring and living in these schools describe themselves as revolutionaries. If this is revolution, then the kind of people who elected Richard Nixon do not have a lot to fear.”

The same could easily be said of many in the alternative teaching and parenting milieu today. In the current American race and class structure, I do not see how unschooling can fully compensate for issues with socialization and exposure to diversity. It may even contribute inadvertently to loneliness, alienation, and exceptionalistic individualism.

At its worst, deschooling at the nuclear family level can be sexist, racist, and authoritarian. Mothers frequently take on

more responsibility than fathers, making it more difficult for women to pursue their own lives. Fathers often assume that teaching the young is not their job. Homeschooling can limit the opportunities young people to be exposed to other-race families. And some children grow to be experts at testing and pushing the fairest boundaries, sometimes nudging parents into the role of perpetual police force. Some strong-willed children will actually rule their parents.

Undisciplined parents might unschool themselves so much that the blending of work and play simply becomes an unrewarding routine calling itself “free”—but being nothing but a monotonous void. Subsequently, giving children the freedom not to learn might severely limit their freedom later in life.

Of no minor consequence, parenting itself takes much time and energy; some full-time, unpaid, homeschooling parents with less time for themselves could become bitter and self-sacrificial martyrs, which does nothing to nourish the health of parent, student, or community.

While I remain impressed with and humbled by many experiments in single-family deschooling and understand that every child, community, and family situation is unique, I am not convinced that home-based deschooling is the best expression of an anti-authoritarian approach to educating young people. As a parent, I have clearly seen the benefits and drawbacks of many different approaches.

In lieu of truly cooperative, racially diverse, and creative community-based free schools for everyone, which remain an ideal and a goal, parents and young people will compromise and participate in the public schools. How best to illuminate our anti-statist and anti-authoritarian attitudes in that context?

—Sunfrog,  
August 2004

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“I’ve been home schooled for most of my life. Just last year, I started a public school. Fortunately, my best friend was going to that school, too. Each morning, she would help me find my way to the classroom (I got it after a few weeks). When I was home schooled the ‘classroom’ was only a few feet away from my room. I also was the only ‘student.’ In school, we had to do so much homework. At home school, I did not have much work at all. When we went on field trips (at school), there were too many rules.”

—Ruby Jazz, age 10

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# Whose kids ? OUR Kids !

**S**ick with the flu, our family had just finished a group medical examination. The doctor paused before leaving and asked, "Does anyone need an excused absence from work? Does the child need one for school?" My first thought was, why does everyone automatically assume that a three-year-old "goes to school"? And my second thought was, since when does a parent have to justify himself to the school authorities, anyway?

## the parent as a surrogate state

**W**hen I was in grade school some thirty years ago, it was understood that the school would act as a sort of police force against truancy, against children who "played hooky." Truancy officers existed for the sole purpose of stopping kids from pursuing idyllic pastimes à la Tom Sawyer, in lieu of attending class. No one really questioned the school's authority to do this. If a child was absent from class, the principle might call the student's home, or a parent's place of employment. And upon returning to class, the child was required to bring "a note from home," from her parent or legal guardian.

In all of these measures, it was understood that the school was acting as a sort of surrogate parent, enforcing the will of the parents in their absence. The assumption was that the parent and the school both wanted the same thing, a good education for the child. The only danger was that the child, in her immaturity, might act against her own best interest. So the school acted as attendance monitor for the busy parents.

However, it was understood that the parent had final say in all matters concerning the child. The reason that the child had to bring a note from a parent was to prove that the parent had given permission for the absence. If the parent said the absence was excused, regardless of the reason, then that was that.

As I learned on my recent family trip to the doctor, this is no longer the case. Today a parent must document that when the she gave the child permission to stay home, that permission was indeed warranted.

Has it come to this, finally? Has our notoriously patriarchal society reached the point that the well-being of a child is now

first the responsibility of the state, and only incidentally that of the parent? Does a parent now draw his authority in familial matters, by extension from the government? Will we someday be required to obtain parenting licenses, while being piously informed that parenting is "a privilege, and not a right"? Will we stand for it?

Piece by piece, one facet after another of American life has been removed from the autonomous social arena, and placed under the jurisdiction of the state and its financiers, the business class. With disturbingly little comment or lament, the American citizenry has offered up a tradition of self-government that it claimed to hold dear to the monopoly of the two political parties and the corporations who fund them. The demands of gaining a livelihood assume an increasingly central role in the modern person's life, at the expense of "personal" time. On the family front, we take it for granted that the state has the right to remove a child from an "unfit" parent. Slowly, surely, the burden of proof shifts from the government to prove that a parent is unfit, and becomes the task of the parent to prove their



worthiness to the state.

Has it really come to this? Are we now prepared to follow the example of Abraham, to stand ready to make a sacrificial offering of our very children to the tender mercies of the government bureaucrats?

## the role of the public school

**W**hat is the real purpose, the true agenda of a public school education? Certainly the "three R's", reading, writing, and arithmetic continue to play a prominent role, and rightly so. And let us neglect for the moment the manner in which history is taught, with its exclusive focus on the western world, and the anglophile's interpretation of events. Let us just concede that history and other social sciences are taught, and that they should be.

But what else do our kids "learn" along the way? Are they being prepared to be active, creative, critical citizens, or are they being groomed for a life of compliance, for a life of being dutifully shepherded through a regimented workplace to their evening spot on the couch, where the television then tells them how to spend the money that they earn?



Let us consider, as an example, the lesson that our children are sure to decipher when they arrive at school and make their morning pass through a metal detector: "You can't trust your friends, but the authorities will protect you." Of course, this proficiently prepares them for a lifetime of watching television news shows, which carry a similarly slanted and alarmist message. "Tonight at 6:00, 'When Poor People Attack Home Owners...'"

Some handwringers are sure to respond, "But what about the Columbine massacre, and the similar school shootings?" And thoughtful parents will reply, "What about them?" In reaction to a handful of copy-cat shootings, we have thrown millions of children across the span of a huge nation into a state of perpetual distrust and anxiety. We should be as skeptical that the Columbine killings actually led to the new obsession with school security, as we are that the World Trade Center attacks led to the Patriot Act or the invasion of Iraq. Big Brother stands ever ready to claim liberties in the name of security, but never seems to return them when the crisis has passed.

### politics makes strange bedfellows

**I**n radical political circles it is customary to periodically evaluate our strategy and tactics, to ask what we could do better, or what we should be doing differently. In this context, it is not uncommon to read analyses that would seem to suggest unlikely political alliances.

One such analysis, one such investigation of the potential for an alliance that I would like to see is between the progressive left and the home school movement. Like the militias, the home-school movement is the product of rural American culture (and in the latter case, of southern culture, I think). It comes with a ready-made media stereotype, that of the stern Christian fundamentalist who believes the US government to be the Beast of the Apocalypse.

As my daughter approaches school age and our family gives thought to her immediate future, I have had the good fortune to make contact with a sampling of these home-schooling families. For every family that fits the stereotype, there is another

who defies it. I have met home schooling fundamentalists, pagans, atheists, and people like myself who fail to see what relevance religion has to education anyway. The majority of home-schoolers in my immediate vicinity I would describe as religious, Christian, but not fundamentalist. Many of these Christian families take issue with the public school more on educational grounds, than on the basis of values or superstition.

### support your local home school association

**M**ore important than the religious inclinations of the particular families involved, is the fact that these parents are taking direct action in rebellion against the domination of the state. Direct action, we will recall, does not necessarily involve property destruction or arrest (much of what passes for direct action these days, actually has the goal of attracting the attention of the corporate media, who serve as an intermediary between the activists and the public they hope to reach). Few actions are so direct, or so threatening to the authority of the state, as to refuse to allow the indoctrination of impressionable children by withdrawing them from public school.

The self-righteous right has claimed the cause of elitist private schools for its own political purposes. The left, in the finest traditions of direct action and grassroots social organization, should embrace the home school movement and claim it as its own. We should initiate a dialogue with such home school associations as may exist, and offer our support and encouragement. We should place demands on the state, not so much for material support, but to leave these brave pioneers alone.

Most importantly, we should stop willingly handing our vulnerable children over to the callous jailers of the state.

—prole cat

January, In the Year of our Store, 2004

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### excerpt from *Boxcar Bertha, aka Sister of the Road* — available from FE books

"I was eleven years old when . . . mother left her boarding house and took us to Little Rock, Arkansas, to a co-operative colony in the hills. We found there thirty-five families, socialists, anarchists, and free-thinkers, all opposed to war, weary of the struggle for existence, blaming capitalism for their difficulties, all wanting economic security and mental peace without too much of an effort. They were living in houses and cottages they built themselves clustered in a beautiful valley. All worked the land.

There were seventy-one of us children. We went to a school conducted in an old barn by two remarkable teachers, Bill White and his wife, Edna. They had taught school in the east, but had been forced to leave when the school board discovered that they had never been legally married. They had come to the colony in hopes of establishing a modern Francisco Ferrer school.

We did not get much regular school work, probably, but we did have some reading, writing, arithmetic, spelling. Mostly we learned about inconsistencies of religion, and about governments, labor, and economics. We were taught that the capitalistic system was wrong and that people are poor because they are exploited and do not get the full product of their labor. We were shown that the government protected the private property of the rich, and that without government and violence the rich could not continue. We were taught also in the colony the dignity of labor and were made to feel the need for preparing ourselves to live in a free co-operative society.

The only textbooks I remember we had were William Morris' *News From Nowhere*, Oscar Wilde's *The Soul of Man Under Socialism*, Emile Zola's *Labor*, and Walt Whitman. We had to recite one of Whitman's poems every day."

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# History Quiz

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please choose the best answer for the following questions.

**1) Before becoming governor of California in 1967, Ronald Reagan**

- a. was a stool pigeon for the FBI and the anti-communist witch-hunters of the House Un-American Activities Committee investigating the film industry.
- b. told a major California newspaper: "It's silly talking about how many years we will have to spend in the jungles of Vietnam when we could pave the whole country and put parking stripes on it and still be home by Christmas."
- c. made a movie about a college professor trying to teach morality to a chimpanzee.
- d. all of the above

**2) As governor of California, Ronald Reagan**

- a. ordered the National Guard to open fire on Free Speech Movement protesters in the People's Park at University of California-Berkeley in 1969, killing one, blinding another, and wounding sixty others.
- b. appointed California National Guard General Louis O. Giuffrida to design Operation Cable Splicer, a three-stage martial law program that developed scenarios for the arrest and long-term detention of anti-Vietnam War activists, political dissidents and "militant negroes [sic]"
- c. spoke about the importance of neo-Confederate "state's rights" to a white audience in Philadelphia, Mississippi (where three civil rights workers were murdered in 1964) with Trent Lott.
- d. all of the above

**3) "October Surprise"**

- a. was a secret and illicit arrangement engineered by agents of the 1980 Reagan-Bush presidential campaign to delay the release of US hostages in Iran until after the November 1980 presidential elections, so that Reagan's opponent, then-President Jimmy Carter, wouldn't gain a popularity boost.
- b. was set-up by campaign manager (later CIA director) William Casey and George H.W. Bush, who met with emissaries from Khomeini's regime in Madrid and Paris who promised money and arms in return for a prolongation of the hostage crisis.
- c. was a secret plan whose details were confirmed by Soviet, Israeli and French intelligence records, as well as the former president of Iran.
- d. all of the above

**4) The Iran-Contra Affair**

- a. was a secret operation whereby the Reagan Administration illegally sold arms to Iran, diverted the profits from these sales to support the death squad operations of the contras against the democratically-elected government of Nicaragua in exchange for cocaine that the CIA trafficked to the US.
- b. involved many of the 170 high-ranking officials who were indicted or forced to resign because of criminal behavior during the eight years of the Reagan regime.
- c. was overseen in part by John Negroponte, then-US ambassador to Honduras, now US "ambassador" to Iraq
- d. all of the above

**5) During the Reagan regime, the HIV-AIDS crisis in the US reached pandemic levels. President Reagan**

- a. was finally shamed into saying the word "AIDS" in public during the summer of 1987.
- b. later speculated in his authorized biography that "the Lord brought down this plague" because "illicit sex is against the Ten Commandments."
- c. inadvertently helped to launch a new kind of radical gay direct-action militancy in the US thanks to his continued refusal to acknowledge the very existence of this public health emergency.
- d. all of the above

**6) Which of the following contemporary crises were started by Reagan?**

- a. the critical mass of neo-conservative right-wing leftovers working for the Bush regime, such as John Poindexter, Donald Rumsfeld, Richard Armitage, and Elliott Abrams
- b. the chemical weapons' atrocities of Saddam Hussein, which the Reagan Administration aided and abetted with money, materials, intelligence and training
- c. the well-armed and well-trained extremist Islamic militants who set up the Taliban and who run al-Qaeda that previously worked for Reagan-Bush's CIA in Afghanistan
- d. all of the above



## SMOKEY'S HAND

### To the Fifth Estate:

Some one gave me your interesting magazine. While I don't "buy" (a dirty word in your vocabulary?) all of it, you make some good points. However, whoever described the Smokey the Bear graphic on the Spring 2004 cover doesn't seem to know their left from right. To me, it seems that the not-so-friendly looking Smokey has his shovel in his left hand?

**W. S. Zimmt**

**FE reply:** Your observant mind could be put to better use than comparing the lines in Gary Snyder's "Smokey the Bear Sutra" poem and the cover graphic which was produced independent of the text. How about a little proofreading for us?

## DEAD REAGAN

### To the Fifth Estate:

The vast majority of people on this planet were thoroughly disgusted by the media's revoltingly prolonged glorification of ex-president Ronald Reagan. Amidst all the hoopla, they forgot to mention his achievements as an arch coward, scab, union-buster, racist, war criminal, mass murderer, and America's (possibly the world's) biggest cocaine dealer. Reagan is dead! Long live Reagan!

The media seem to have conveniently forgotten that Reagan arranged for tons of cocaine to be smuggled into America to finance his illegal subversion of the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. A mass-marketing stroke of genius, maybe. A heinous criminal conspiracy, surely.

There is little doubt that these crimes against humanity can be directly attributed to Reagan, and no doubt that, if a trial were held, he would be convicted of conspiracy to commit murder. That is, he knew damn well the actions he took would result in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people, if not millions: deaths directly caused by Reagan's sanctioning of the corporate pollution of the world and subjection of its inhabitants to known toxins, such as asbestos; deaths caused by Reagan's importation of cocaine; deaths caused by Reagan's sponsorship of terrorist death squads

throughout the world (i.e., the Contras, Taliban, etc.); deaths caused by Reagan arming both Iraq and Iran; deaths caused by Reagan sending troops into Lebanon and Grenada. Reagan is dead! Long live Reagan!

Now "America" is going to decide which criminal should be "elected" next: John Kerry, the self-admitted war criminal, or George Bush, the draft-dodging, born-again coward? There's absolutely no point in voting at all. Why give known criminals a political mandate so they can commit more crimes?

Can't stand the suspense? I can't stand the hypocrisy and refuse to be suckered by the spectacle. As Rob Tyner of the MC5 once sang, "I'm sick to my guts of the American ruse!"

The statist death-trip blood-drip is killing us all, just as surely as it is killing this planet. The only rational choice left is to tear the whole edifice up and use the stones to destroy the builders. "Under the paving stones lies the beach!", said the Situationists and I'm all for swimming, and sun bathing too—if we could get the pollutants out of the water, and our minds, and get the ozone layer back! Reagan is dead! Long live Reagan!

**Rand W. Gould**  
**Mound Correctional Facility**  
**Detroit**  
**NOT NEW MASTERS**  
**Dear rades at Fifth Estate,**

I'd like to comment on the "Selecting a Master or Ousting a Tyrant" collection of essays regarding voting in your Spring 2004 edition.

Larry Talbot says he is one dog who won't be answering his master's voice this election day. My question is, why must voting necessarily be an answer to the master's call, and, how is it that few can see how voting could be used to oust the capitalist master class and dissolve the political state without replacing these with other masters and hierarchical social structures?

Anarchists rail against the idea of using the ballot in this fashion saying that by doing so people are legitimizing the state and all its myriad corruptions, or abdicating anarchist principles; yet, anarchists use American currency every day, and many even push for reforms

within the capitalist state apparatus. Does this mean they wish to validate the political state??

To exhort people not to vote for rogues who seek to run capitalism, be they Republican, Democrat, Greens, reform socialists, or authoritarian Marxist Leninist-Stalinoids, makes good sense. But what if the over 50% of the non-voters were to organize into leaderless, bottom up, democratic structures and pick from among the ranks persons to run for political office with a clear mandate to end capitalism and dissolve the state once a majority of these persons are in office?

What we seek is not new masters or an extension of capitalism, but to end the whole rotten exploitive system. Perhaps this could be achieved through mass insurrection, which will entail a lot of bloodshed; or possibly a mass general strike, which does not necessarily guarantee the death of the state or of hopefully minimizing death and violence. Many may protest that political office, even for only the short duration of time necessary to dismantle the state would automatically corrupt.

If your objective were to gain and hold state power, as capitalist and state capitalist Marxist Leninists seek to do, you'd be corrupted from the outset. But a massive majoritarian effort with the clear objective of making an end to capitalism need not be so.

All you have to do is ask yourself if you as an anarchist, along with perhaps hundreds of other anarchists, were elected to the executive and congressional offices, would power corrupt you? Would you run capitalism, or immediately set about its dissolution before you nailed shut the doors on the White House?

Be rational, demand the impossible,  
**Kevin Glover**  
**Huntsville Unit**  
**Huntsville, TX**

**THE STONE AGE**  
**To the Fifth Estate:**

I ran into the Summer issue of your journal on a visit to N. Carolina and it took me back to Berkeley in the 1950-60 era. I won't bother trying to point out all the errors, but the article by Derrick



Jensen, "Beyond Backward and Forward," was too much to resist.

The Stone Age is something I know a little about, and want to point out that Stone Age groups consisted of small numbers (20-40 people), and they lived short, hard lives. Murder, animal attacks, disease and weather contributed to their misery.

It was only when groups of about 10,000 formed, with leaders and specialists, that life became worth living. We find samples of health treatment, clothing, storage of food, and religion from this larger group. I might note that the Chinese have lived in really big cities for 7000 years and show no signs of "big city deterioration."

The loss of forests by present day man are generally localized and due to inadequate development. In the US, the national forests have increased in the last 30 years—go to New England and see it. The number of wild animals—deer, moose and coyote—are much larger; ask anyone who lives in Pennsylvania and tries to have a garden. Even in Yellowstone the wolves are doing well.

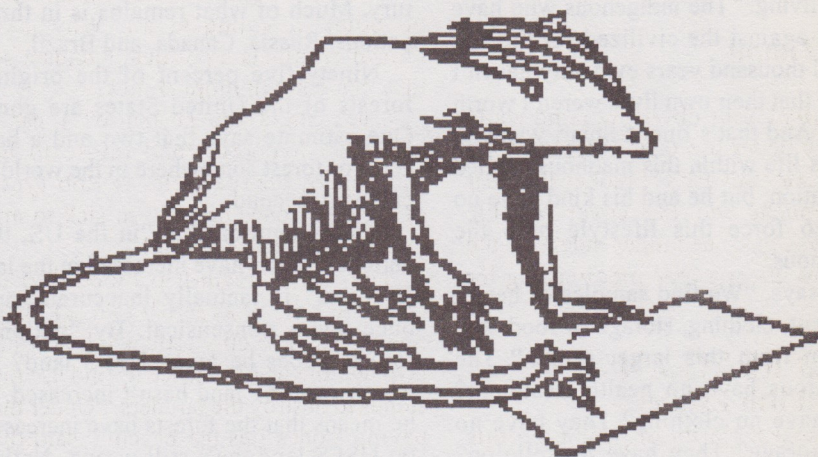
Cities are not all growing at the expense of the non-settled land; New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Cleveland, etc. are shrinking. All of the above cities are declining as people move to less settled areas to get away from people like Mr. Jensen and his friends.

AIDs, tuberculosis, plus other invented diseases that attack the poor under crowded conditions, are part of it. Who would want to send their kids to schools with other kids who have AIDS? Why do you think private schools are doing so well?

Population is a problem; that is why we want to keep the poor and ignorant out of the US. In fact, the population growth of the earth is starting to slow down; by 2050 it will start to shrink.

The author talks about hydrocarbon fuel running out; it is limited, but the new Japanese engines will be more efficient; the use of plants to produce unlimited fuel for autos and heating—plants grow naturally and regularly; did you know that? Nuclear power is becoming safer (the first use of steam led to awful accidents; we didn't know how to do it.). Now that we understand it, nuclear accidents will be small.

# LETTERS to Fifth Estate



## Fifth Estate Letters Policy

We welcome letters commenting on our articles, ones stating opinions, or reports from your area. We can't print every letter we receive, but each is read by the collective and considered for publication. Letters via email or on disk are appreciated, but typed or hand-written ones are acceptable. Length should not exceed 400 words. We reserve the right to edit for length or style. If you are interested in writing a longer response, please contact us.

**Post Office Box 6, Liberty, TN 37095**  
**fifthestate@pumpkinhollow.net**

I am sure none of you will agree with me or learn anything. Your clumsy efforts to interfere with modern civilization are amusing.

**Stuart A. Hoenig**

**Professor, Univ. of Arizona, Tucson**

**Derrick Jensen replies:** There are so many factual problems with Stuart Hoenig's letter that I hardly know where to start. But I'll try.

Hoenig asserts "that Stone Age groups . . . lived short, hard lives." He is factually inaccurate. The "nasty, brutish, and short" cliché has been debunked by anthropologists for at least the last forty

years, and the myriad descriptions of American Indian life reveal a life far richer and happier than that of the civilized.

Since Stuart probably wouldn't believe Indians anyway, here are a couple of European sources: In *Letters From an American Farmer*, Michel Guillaume Jean de Crèvecoeur noted, "There must be in the Indians' social bond something singularly captivating, and far superior to be boasted of among us; for thousands of Europeans are Indians, and we have no examples of even one of those Aborigines having from choice become Europeans."



Benjamin Franklin was even more to the point: "No European who has tasted Savage Life can afterwards bear to live in our societies." It was commonly noted that at prisoner exchanges, Indians ran joyously to their relatives while white captives had to be bound hand and foot to not run back to their captors.

Hoenig writes, "It was only when groups of about 10,000 formed with leaders and specialists that life became worth living." The indigenous who have fought against the civilized for the last several thousand years evidently haven't agreed that their own lives weren't worth living. And that's fine if Stuart wants to live his life within this madhouse called civilization, but he and his kind have no right to force this lifestyle onto the indigenous.

He says, "We find samples of health treatment, clothing, storage of food, and religion from this larger group." The indigenous have no health treatment? They have no clothing? They have no food storage? They have no religion? This would be news to the indigenous.

Stuart simply doesn't know what he is talking about. Health declined with the rise of agriculture. Indians in cold climates did not walk around naked. Pemmican is a form of food storage. And, in many climates the indigenous have no need of food storage, since they do not destroy their land base.

Regarding religion, here is what native American writer Vine Deloria told me about Indian religion: "Most Indian traditions never had a religion in the sense of dogmas and creeds, nor did they have the sort of ongoing deity that Christians speak of, by which I mean they didn't see a specific higher personality who demanded worship and adoration. Rather, they saw and experienced personality in every aspect of the universe and called it "Woniya" (Spirit), and looked to it for guidance, a lot like Socrates obeying his "daemon."

I don't know what Stuart is talking about with "big city deterioration." But China makes my point perfectly. The natural world is a wreck. The forests are gone. The rivers are trashed. And the indigenous? There are pockets, but most

have long since been conquered.

Hoenig's sentence, "The loss of forests by present day man are generally localized and due to inadequate development," is both factually inaccurate and nonsensical. As George Draffan and I write in *Strangely Like War: The Global Assault on Forests*, the forests of the world are in bad shape. About three-quarters of the world's original forests have been cut, most of it in the past century. Much of what remains is in three nations: Russia, Canada, and Brazil.

Ninety-five percent of the original forests of the United States are gone. One estimate says that two and a half acres of forest somewhere in the world is cut every second.

His contention that "in the US, the national forests have increased in the last 30 years" is factually inaccurate, and once again nonsensical. By "national forests" does he mean USFS land? In which case the land hasn't increased. If he means that the forests have increased on USFS land, he's still wrong. Native forests are down to about 5 percent in

## Modern man would require an increase in contemporary carrying capacity equivalent to ten earths

this country.

He says, "the number of wild animals... are much larger. Even in Yellowstone the wolves are doing well. "Ninety percent of the large fish in the oceans are gone. Bison are essentially gone. Salmon, essentially gone. Wolves are at a tiny percentage of their range.

Even when Stuart is right, he's still wrong: he says deer numbers are up. Wrong, Stuart. White-tail deer are up. Mule deer are down. It depends on the species.

As George Draffan and I say in *Strangely Like War*, "The Forest Service and other timber industry supporters often claim that their treatment—i.e., their deforestation—improves wildlife habitat. This is sneaky on their part, since they're defining wildlife only to be those creatures who prefer edges, for example white-tailed deer.... Always, always,

always ask, 'Whose habitat improves? Whose habitat is degraded?' And then, of course, you should always expect them to lie to you. But you knew that already."

Hoenig thinks, "Cities are not all growing at the expense of the non-settled land; New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Cleveland, etc. are shrinking. All of the above cities are declining as people move to less settled areas to get away from people like Mr. Jensen and his friends."

First, I don't live in New York, Philadelphia, Boston, or Cleveland, so if Stuart thinks they're moving to get away from me, he's as wrong here as he is with everything else.

Second, the point is the importation of resources, as Stuart would have understood were he not ideologically blind.

Where do the resources come from that allow him to live his civilized lifestyle? Where do the metals come from, and what are the ecological effects of their mining, smelting, and transporting? What about the plastics? Cities require a countryside from which to steal resources. The people who live in New York City could not live there without stealing resources from the countryside. Prior to the arrival of civilization, the people who lived in what is now occu-

pied Mannahatta lived there sustainably for thousands of years.

Hoenig talks about "use of plants to produce unlimited fuel for autos and heating." William R Catton Jr. wrote in *Overshoot: The Ecological Basis of Revolutionary Change*, "To become completely free from dependence on prehistoric energy (without reducing population or per capita energy consumption)," and remember this was more than twenty years ago, meaning that things are now far more extreme than his description, "modern man would require an increase in contemporary carrying capacity equivalent to ten earths—each of whose surfaces was forested, tilled, fished, and harvested to the current extent of our planet.

Without ten new earths, it followed that man's exuberant way of life would be cut back drastically sometime in the



future, or else that there would someday be many fewer people."

The contention that "nuclear power is becoming safer" is a statement of faith. Many components and waste products of nuclear programs are lethal for tens of thousands of years or longer. It strikes me as foolish to irradiate and poison humans and nonhumans so people can have retractable stadium roofs and aluminum beer cans.

Hoenig finishes saying, "Your clumsy efforts to interfere with modern civilization are amusing." I say, civilization is not sustainable. It will crash. The only real question at this point is what will be left of the natural world—the world that is our home—when this happens.

## ETHICS, AS VEGANISM To the Fifth Estate:

In your Summer 2004 edition, you printed a letter by Wendy Kobylarz and a response by FE staffer John Johnson on the topic of veganism. I admire Wendy's desire to defend this lifestyle, but I believe her argument rests on a very common misunderstanding regarding animal rights, which also touches on the broader topic of anarchist principles.

We are called egalitarian because we uphold the principle of equal rights for all. But when asserting that we wish to extend equal rights to all, we should be clear that we are not referring to some classical liberal notion that "all men are created equal," and thereby extend that to an argument for the moral equivalence between humans and animals. Not only is this patently absurd, but when drawn out to its logical conclusions, it's downright frightening.

We observe the world around us and develop a system of values. If done rationally, this will lead us to a "truth" that is, as far as our limited human understanding can determine, factual: in agreement with reality. These collective "truths" are the principles upon which we base our (moral) code of conduct. And so, our code of conduct will depend on what values we assign to things.

To say that a non-human is not identical in value to a human is not to set human above animal in some hierarchical scheme where animals lose all importance under the "superior" worth of

humanity and where animals only have value depending upon their relationship to humans. It is to admit, however, that there are qualitative differences between all forms of life and that at times we are required to make value judgments between them.

So, the question is not whether the mammals that provide the meat are worthy of consideration as equals, but what criteria we are to use when making such value judgments? All of us must eat. But when deciding what to eat we should rely on our ethics to guide us. Food, as defined, is any substance taken in by a plant or animal to enable it to live and grow: anything that nourishes. Johnson states that in an ideal ecosystem we are all food.

If we're all food, then what is to prevent me from consuming you, or your Aunt Judy? First, I wouldn't want to because you're not exactly nourishing. You've probably taken most of your nutrients from another animal, who got it from the healthiest source that is available to us animals: plants. Until we can grow roots and do that photosynthesis thing, we have to rely on plants. And, are there any ethical considerations that would insist that we cut the cow and Aunt Judy out of the food chain? Yes, and it's quite simple.

Apart from nutritional considerations, animals have a greater degree of sentience and therefore are able to experience suffering to greater degrees. It seems that in evolution, life expands out to greater measures of complexity with accompanying and increasing levels of awareness and sensitivity.

The more developed the nervous system, the more pain-and luckily pleasure-you can feel. And, being that we humans have what appears to the greatest level of awareness (if not a corresponding level of intelligence), and along with it more potential to be sympathetic, it follows that when we make our choices about where to get our nutrition we should do so in the most compassionate way possible.

This is the best reason to choose a vegan lifestyle. It simply hurts less to eat a carrot than a cow. This is why we choose not to eat or wear animals; because we have the awareness to under-

stand that, when we consciously choose to refrain from being a cause of that suffering and facilitate that happiness—even if it simply means leaving them alone—we are asserting the rights of these animals to exist of and for themselves.

**Malcolm Wright**  
Spruce Pine, NC

## DIVERSITY, FREEDOM Dear Fifth Estate Folks:

I just read your Summer 2004 issue on primitivism and am much impressed. Good to see you're still out there fighting. The more of us, the better.

I'm working on a pocket guide that will include info on stuff like running a car on straight veggie oil and on other biofuels like pelletized switchgrass.

We haven't done so well protesting and complaining, or even, let's face it, voting. So, at this point, the most serious way to free ourselves from the fuckers in the suits is to simply make them irrelevant. If you gotta get around, use a bike. If you need to move big stuff, use a freight bike. If you've gotta have a car, run it on "waste" and let the oilgopolists go to hell.

I'd be a much happier guy if every Food Not Bombs group could get a few hundred acres under horticulture-style/permaculture cultivation and start really spreading the free comestibles. After all, Mexico City raised tons of food on rooftops and little rafts until the Spanish came and "improved" it.

And, remember, their "disorder and chaos" is our "diversity and freedom."

**Justin**  
New York City

## DEMANDS To the Fifth Estate:

One of your questions in your request for articles on education struck me as kind of odd coming from an anti-authoritarian publication: "How can communities demand radical pedagogy?" Demand from whom?

**Caliban**





## News & Reviews

Readers may have noticed that the important content last time limited our reviews sections. But now we are back. This summer, we caught up on our reading and offer the following four pages to comment on some of the many great books and 'zines that we've received in the last several months. And we pledge to continue next time. We love to get mail! Please send us your journal or book to look at. Or send us a short review. If you publish or distribute magazines, please contact us about trade possibilities.

PO Box 6, Liberty, TN 37095



**Globalize Liberation: How to Uproot the System and Build a Better World.** Edited by David Solnit. Almost 500 pages! City Lights. 2004. \$18. Available from the Barn. See page 54 for ordering information.

A nice companion in any radical library to *We Are Everywhere!*, the recently released *Globalize Liberation* is a manual, encyclopedia, and primary text for the global justice movement. With contributors back from the trenches to pose theory for transforming the movement for a new world, *Globalize Liberation* gravitates towards uprisings, from the blockades on the highways to the hope in the barrios, from Argentina to Mexico, from Quebec to California.

In the tight introduction, editor David Solnit does a good job grounding his theory for "a new radicalism" in the practice of direction action. He rejects the ideological trappings of Left and Right and steers carefully clear of using our A-word to define his perspective. Solnit writes: "The new radicalism has many names or no name at all." He intentionally avoids anarchism as a label, even though it's in the Bay Area anarchist milieu where Solnit has grown as an organizer and tireless revolutionary. I don't mind (or agree with) Solnit's aversion to labels, but I do take issue with his repeated use of the adjective "common-sense" to describe his politics. In my experience, common-sense is simply a loaded code-word for unexamined assumptions, especially those of a knee-jerk and fundamentalist nature. In Solnit's case, it almost comes across as a born-again anti-intellectualism, and based on the brilliant material he's compiled, we can trust he's no anti-intellectual.

For some readers who are very well-read in movement literature, this well-organized and carefully-produced volume covers no new ground. People may see it as just one more in a glut of post-Seattle primers touting the glory of full-time activism. On the other hand, I like a review of basic themes through foundational texts, and *Globalize Liberation* is perfect for that. If there were a required 101 class in anti-capitalism, this book would be central to the reading list. I'd recommend this hearty effort to younger activists in a heartbeat. —Sunfrog

**The Surre(gion)alist Manifesto and Other Writings.** Max Cafard. An Exquisite Corpse Book. 2003. PO Box 25051, Baton Rouge, LA 70802. [cafard@corpse.org](mailto:cafard@corpse.org) 170 pages. \$12. Available from the Barn. See page 53 for ordering information.

Long-time Fifth Estate readers are already familiar with the juicy philosophical ferocity of Da-Da-Daoist Max Cafard. In fact, many of the irreverent instigations in his new greatest-hits compilation have previously manifested in our pages, including the still stunning title-track. If a reader opens to a random page, she is likely to stumble across a thesis like this:

"The Left has to be even more dynamic: more anarchic, energetic, creating unheard of and unimagined surpluses. Advanced capitalism gave up worldly asceticism long ago, but much of the Left has perpetuated a monasticism of militantism and sectarianism. If the Left is to have a future, it must begin thinking again about the almost taboo concept of freedom."

Mixing Perlman and Nietzsche, butchering Bookchin, and dissing Derrida, Cafard cooks us a non-ideological gumbo with irrepressible spices, castigates conformist philosophy, and shreds pious politics with a poetic scythe. Our colleague David Watson describes Cafard as a "visionary smart-ass," and I think that's as apt a moniker as any.

As a writer whose poetry reads like political non-fiction and whose political non-fiction reads like poetry, I have some indulgent habits in common with this prankster of word-play this alliteration aficionado. But in these victimless writerly crimes, I am but an outlaw apprentice to the outlandish Cafard. I'm just honored to smell the sentences blooming in the brambles of this sumptuous tome. —Sunfrog

The heartland looked pretty scary in *Harper's* excerpt from Tom Frank's new book *What's the Matter with Kansas?* But there's hope for denizens of the flatland: The Crossroads Infoshop and Radical Bookstore is now open in downtown Kansas City. The new infoshop and bookstore features books, magazines, and materials from the radical left. The space is a worker-owned co-op, pursuing affiliation with the IWW as a unionized workplace. Infoshop webmaster Chuck0 is part of the Crossroads Infoshop collective. Crossroads Infoshop and Radical Bookstore 1830 Locust St. (at 19th St) Kansas City, MO 64108 On the web: <http://www.infoshop.org/crossroads.html>

As FE prepares for its 40th anniversary issue, we can look to our Minneapolis comrades in the punk rock milieu for a little inspiration. Earlier this year, to celebrate its 15th anniversary, *Profane Existence* published a very impressive book-length issue with a compilation CD. If this doesn't "make punk a threat again," what will? More grassroots than the wildly successful "Rock Against Bush" movement, all props to *Profane Existence* as an integral part of the anarchist punk movement. Contact *Profane Existence* for more information. PO Box 8722 Minneapolis, MN 55408

612-722-1134 <http://www.profaneexistence.com>





Doris 22, POB 1734, Ashville, NC 28802. \$1.50 or \$1 plus stamps

This impressive, long-running, personal, DIY zine by Cindy includes interviews old and new, jokes, and journal-like entries. The centerpiece is an interview done with Cindy about anarchism and feminism, and being "out" as an anarchist. Here's a short and inspiring section from that:

"Anarchism was amazing to me. I had always had this really deep love for humanity, and always saw so much potential in people, and here was a political philosophy that was based on these things. I started wanting to change the whole world, and I believed, and still do believe that it's possible. We can create a world based on compassion and mutual aid, rather than competition and mindless consumption. It's the only thing that really makes sense.

"My boyfriend was anti-feminist. He thought it was divisive and unnecessary. At first I thought he must be right. Having my own ideas and beliefs was still new to me, and I had terrible self-confidence and was very vulnerable. Eventually, though, I learned to see feminism as a completely essential part of the struggle for an anarchist world, and just completely essential in general, for obvious reasons. Sexism and patriarchy are so ingrained, in men, women, and transgender people, and it's not going to just magically go away. If you're interested in feminist movements during revolutionary liberation struggles, I really recommend the books *Free Women of Spain*, and also *Sandino's Daughters*. There are lots of good books out there, but these two were inspiring to me."

*Pie any Means Necessary: The Biotic Baking Brigade Cookbook*. Agent Apple. AK Press, 2004.

"I went to jail having sabotaged nothing more than a little man's big ego." —Rahula Janowski

This very interesting discourse on political food-throwing focuses mainly on using pies to unwelcome politicians and plutocrats or express slapstick and subversion. The book covers everything from recipes to court cases. There are many interesting stories, including one about pie-throwing activist Livernoise, who required and obtained vegan jail meals for himself. Livernoise relays the thoughts and feelings he had during his months in jail. Challenging the parameters of appropriate protest, the amazing book quotes Eldridge Cleaver calling violence "as American as apple pie" and Gandhi claiming he would "prefer violence than the emasculation of a whole race." —Leafy

*The Day Philosophy Dies*. Casey Maddox. Flashpoint Press. 2004.

Cameras. Ready. Action! The narrator has been kidnapped by cruel radicals, to be the superstar in a movie that will change the world forever. The reader feels the captive's confusion as the chapters show a collage of events, being titled "fast forward," "rewind," or "play." This book knots-up my stomach and takes my breath away, with themes and moods that remind me of John Carpenter's *Escape from L.A.*

Through the kidnappers, Maddox explores some views on anarchy as seen by the larger society; psychological and physical cruelty are the captors' tools. The captive is influenced by these methods, yet eventually becomes a sincere revolutionist.

The narrative packs existential angst, alternative life-styles, and the exposure of Western culture's intrinsic problems. This novel exposes the Western culture as Ann Wilson Schaef does in *When Society Becomes an Addict*. Western civilization is now protected by Patriot-Act pomposity watching over the mining and enslaving of the whole planet.

—Leafy

*Animal Ingredients: A to Z*, 3rd Ed., E. G. Smith Group and AK Press, 2004.

Want to know how vegan your body-lotion is? How about your toothpaste or seasoned-rice mix? This book reports on the many chemicals and additives used in our society and gives parameters for using the safer ones. Think you already know it all, from years of label reading? Included are over 10 pages of those hard-to-pronounce ingredients derived from animals. Page 31 tells all the ways animal blood is used in our society. This crucial resource will make a great addition to any collective library. —Leafy

*The Military Strategy of Women and Children*. Butch Lee, Beguine Press and Kersplebedeb. Order from Stoopsale Books, POB 268985, Chicago, IL, 60626. 2003. I don't always do this, but I did read the last page first. I knew then that I loved this book with its clarifications about women's society and women's economy. In the spirit of the most provocative and path-breaking radical feminisms, Butch Lee explains the dynamics used as "euro-capitalism continued the Witchhunt in new forms, destroying the women's economy and independence, raising up a native patriarchy, which got addicted to capitalistic values." This militant, meta-political primer about gender and generational issues, Lee's contribution to meaningful male-culture bashing—done through historical evidence and current-events facts—shows how egalitarian societies have succeeded before being destroyed by imperialism. —Leafy

*No Man's Land*. Fielding Dawson. Times Change Press. 8453 Blackney Rd., Sebastopol, CA 95472. 2000. Reading this book taught me a few other points about creative writing, yet it really is a documentary about the prison this story is set in. Tension, "like a needle floating on water," is palpable between Dawson and the Guard after Dawson hugs the inmates.

Dawson helps a group of male inmates do creative play-writing. Prison managers mess with almost every step Dawson takes. The play they write becomes a story about some of the common, inane prison situations: "They let the guys go they know will come back." A sick, elderly prisoner is double-bunked with a healthy prisoner because the Hole is full. "They kill you in No Man's Land."

Dawson also frets: "He'd looked into my eyes because ... he hadn't learned not to.... He'd be like the other guards, and that would be his ambition: be like them. Them. To hell with them. And him." It's good reading, Dawson spitting at the prison walls which represent the State's demands. —Leafy

*Beggars of Life: A Hobo Autobiography*, Jim Tully, AK Press/Nabat: 674 A Street, Oakland, CA, 94612-1163. 2004.

The introduction by Charles Willeford calls Jim Tully a "Holistic Barbarian." He also notes that the "political-industrial-military-academic complex" that Tully criticized the 1920s is what we still have today. In collaboration with AK Press, Nabat Books is reprinting works by "various misfits, outsiders, and rebels," considering that today's successful people are likely toxic.

In the autobiography, Tully describes the trips that taught him to be a hobo. He also had to develop a sense of humour, but always saw beauty everywhere. This narrative contains some of Tully's famous one-liners, which distill situations or qualities into their simple essences. —Leafy



## Leftism, nihilism, and the anarchy I seek: A review essay of some current propaganda by Anu Bonobo

Read and considered, perused and recommended, liked and disliked, discussed and commented on in the following section:

*Green Anarchy* (current issue available from FE books for \$4 or free with any book order, while supplies last) Issues #16 and 17, Spring and Summer 2004 PO Box 11331, Eugene, OR 97440 collective@greenanarchy.org

*Nihilism, Anarchy, and the 21st Century* By Aragorn

*Momentum: Journal of Anti-Capitalist and Anti-Authoritarian Politics* #1 Summer 2004 539 53rd Street, 3rd Floor, Brooklyn, NY 11220 momentum@riseup.net

*The Dawn: A monthly advocate for constructive anarchism* #1 July 2004, no price listed, 8 pages tabloid PO Box 24715 Oakland, CA 94623 ed@the-dawn-org

*Oystercatcher* #1 Edited by Ron Sakolsky gtdenman@mars.ark.com Available from FE Books for \$3 (or free by request with a book or CD purchase)

In the days leading up to our final push for finishing FE 366, I stumbled across an "Open Letter to US Anarchists," by Heather of Midwest Unrest. With Heather, I feel the frustration that an anticapitalist insurrection hasn't yet destroyed the government of this illegitimate nation. With Heather, I believe we should be self-conscious and self-aware of our politics and the effort they require. With Heather, I believe that "now is the time to translate our passion into eloquent action."

But I just can't get with her that lifestyle dumpster-divers are the root of all evil or that all "motivation and accompanying hope have fizzled." A few too many of us may suffer from a serious case of the Seattle syndrome, using one freeze-frame from five years ago as the defining action, the catch-all barometer for bucking the system. No, the revolution will not come to sate our incurable impatience and irreverence, but the milieu the claims the anarchist moniker has more than a few accomplishments worthy of noting. Self-publishing is not the alpha and omega of anarchist organizing, but those of us with journals and websites are busy building something; it may not be a "movement" but it's at least a loud and ambitious rumble, "a loud and continuous uproar of many human voices," as one of my favorite 'zines used to put it.

I'm thankful for all the comrades consistently stuffing the FE post office box with their latest books, manifestos, novels, chapbooks, journals, sketches, photos, letters, and good ol' 'zines. If the continued proliferation of radical propaganda provides any temperature gauge for our goals, I would suggest, as the surrealists say, that The Forecast is Hot!

While some would say that what we do with our rage in the streets is more important than what we say on the pages of our 'zines, I believe we need both. An action ungrounded in theoretical coherence can be as frustrating as navel-gazing, hyper-intellectual theory without the faintest hope for implementation.

There may not be much unity across the fragmented tapestry of scenes and subcultures, nodes and nests-not enough to suggest an

ecumenical unity as I was naïve enough to do not too long ago-but we definitely have enough energetic suggestion, militant nuance, and revolutionary conjecture to warrant going forward. And given the frightening stakes, what else is there to do?

In the anarchist scene, we have our nihilists and nice-ists, our democrats and communists, our militant queens and queer moms. If we stop launching attacks on each other long enough to smell the spraypaint drying, we might discover there's something hatching and happening.

Even as some 'zines die or go on sabbatical, new ones emerge. Welcoming its first issue is *The Dawn*, a new anarcho-communist tabloid based in Oakland. While I like the piece by Prolecat that graces the front page, there's not much more beyond it than the usual activist fare: pieces on prison issues, Palestine, and imperialism. Then, to piss this reviewer off, there's the obligatory Crimethinc-bashing (which I've had enough of to last a lifetime) and entrenched anti-primitivism. The editorial statement claims to "bring anarchism to the present," but there's nothing "new" about this green-baiting denunciation: "Almost every American anarchist newspaper is infested with primitivism [no one we know-ed.]. We want nothing to do with it as it is irrelevant and genocidal."

While I'm no more ideological about my post-civilization perspective than these comrades are about their self-described "biting commentary," I do hope they lighten-up just a little for their second issue.

A bird of an entirely different feather is the home-made harbinger of heresy heralding from my friends on Denman Island, British Columbia. *The Oystercatcher* is a remarkable and magickal debut from Ron Sakolsky and his partners in crime: Sheila Nopper, Seaweed, Don LaCoss, Peter Wilson, and others. The 'zine begins with an introduction by Sheila to the bird from whom this mag takes its name. Considered by some the bonobo of the bird world, oystercatchers are peaceful pleasure-seekers, bisexual and often polyamorous.

The centerpiece essay is Sakolsky's speculative history that makes some far-flung connections between his island home and the Orkney Islands. Begun as a mayday meditation, the piece "Dancing Waves" is an intoxicating, imaginative potion that forges a unity for pagans and anarchists, a sort of defiant, literary witchcraft to defend against reactionary attacks of all kinds.

After an excerpt from Peter Wilson's "Atlantis Manifesto" and a Don LaCoss collage, I couldn't really ask for more in a 'zine. But the concluding essay "Land and Liberty" by Seaweed is an impressive surprise for me. Dancing from squats to rural subsistence and dealing with many issues I've contemplated as a member of anarchist collectives and communes for my entire adult life, Seaweed offers an inclusive, inspiring, and radical vision, a thorough statement of an anarchist politics of claiming space and spurring community.

Without doubt, I hope these Denman Islanders deliver a sequel to this stunning debut.



Also making a splash this summer with a first issue is *Momentum: Journal of Anti-Capitalist and Anti-Authoritarian Politics*. With impressive, well-written, and problematic essays on the election from Wayne Price, Chris Crass, Cindy Milstein, Graciela Monteagudo, and others, this new journal of "intra-movement dialogue" presents varying shades from the anarchy as democracy, anarchism as leftist populism wing of the anti-authoritarian milieu. While smarter and more balanced than anything from the platformist camp, this remains some very serious and sober work indeed. Apathetic abstainers beware: "Many have concluded that it is no longer possible to 'never mind the ballots,' even if we want to." Or, as Chris Crass puts it: "Our politics of non-engagement in so many crucial struggles involving the state, electoral politics among them, have in the end done more to de-legitimize anarchists than to de-legitimize the power of the state." Ouch—that doesn't leave much wiggle room for the stay-at-home revolutionary on election day! Thankfully, Wayne Price slices and dices the dire and dutiful perspective of Crass and others, refusing to endorse politics as parties at all.

I don't mind if my friends vote as long as it's not for Bush, but I don't trust the seriousness of some of these rants, which implies that all well-meaning anarchists will eventually end up bureaucrats on some neighborhood-council. At least liberals are willing to let specialists do the grunt-work of governing so we can download music and drink wine, but these would be anti-authoritarian politicians scare we with all their talk of "democratizing the social struggle," "structural reform in the electoral realm," and "municipal campaigns." Self-government is like self-employment: in the latter, you are always at work, and in the former, you are always a politician. If these obviously decent radicals are as serious as they seem about a "new politics," perhaps they should investigate the hedonist-insurrectionist thread that seeks not new power relations but new social relations that are rhizomatic and horizontal.

Well the generalist, anti-capitalist, social-ecologist perspective of *Momentum* is a far-cry from the other coast where a eco-nihilism is wrecking the ideology of utopia with a clear and present negation of the negation.

The revival in anarcho-nihilism might be appreciated by the non-nihilist anarchists much like Valerie Solanas's virulently anti-male SCUM manifesto could be appreciated by non-insecure, anti-patriarchal men. Personally, I look at Aragorn's embrace of nihilism like I do the Church of Euthanasia's "Save the Planet, Kill Yourself" stylized statements. That is, I can enjoy your theory, but frankly, I am not interested in your practice.

I wouldn't necessarily suggest that nihilist movement exists in North America (nihilists probably abhor the notion of a movement anyways), but the nihilist idea has been getting some serious play as a powerfully provocative intellectual strain proposed by the anarchist writer Aragorn! in the pages of *Green Anarchy* and distilled in his pamphlet *Nihilism, Anarchy, and the 21st Century*.

The thesis of the new nihilism goes something like this: "What nihilism provides then is an alternative to the alternative that does not embed an idealist image of the new world it would create. It is not an Idealist project. Nihilism is the political philosophy that

begins with the negation of this world. What exists beyond those gates has yet to be written."

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In my day-to-day life as an activist and academic, parent and participant in my community, I probably have a lot in common with the comrades at *Momentum* and in other like-minded projects. I wish to cut the cloth of my praxis in the real world at the same time I seek a new world within the shell of the old. But I do not trust what I perceive as the vanguardist, leftist, political machinations of would-be leaders for the leaderless. This is not a problem with Aragorn's provocative position. I imagine this nihilism might be

really useful for the activist-types burdened by lack of personal time, weighed down by a heavy load of moralistic and guilt-ridden selflessness.

But beyond a quasi-adolescent and hyper-intellectual way to one-up the hippy elders, nihilism doesn't appear that sustainable to me.

When the nihilist rejects utopia, I can't really get with that. The green riot of anarcho-nihilism is my friend when it forges a new intellectual space to talk about desire and destruction, perhaps encouraging the reckless courage required to reverse history. But as an all-encompassing antidote to progressive leftism, I see it contributing to burnout, interpersonal chaos, and more prisoners-of-war. Because at root, nihilism is selfish without self-awareness, amoral to the point of being an idea just as plausible for endorsing capitalist apologies for nuclear Armageddon. It's a worthwhile challenge, one I have considered and rejected. I remain utopian, still dreaming of an anarchy that is not Aragorn's anarchy.

Being an ecumenical anarchist at heart, I like what I read in the milieu, even when I disagree with it. It's not my anarchy if I cannot argue with you about what that means, but it's also not my anarchy if we cannot occasionally leave the in-fighting behind.

The anarchy I seek is in all these 'zines and none of them. It is: An anarchy purer than the watered-down anarchy-lite that equates itself with direct democracy and embraces civic responsibility; an anarchy deeper than the deep ecology of the anti-civilization saboteurs; an anarchy more communal than the tired syndicalism of the urban centers; an anarchy tighter and more intimate than the organizational platformism of the anarcho-communist federations; an anarchy organized horizontally through the chosen families and solidarity clusters of trusted comrades; an anarchy unafraid of animism and manifest, earth-based spiritualism; and an anarchy queerer and more genderful, more multi-colored, loving, and inclusive, more dynamically peaceful yet courageously waging war against against all war.

(The ideas suggested and implied here will be explored in much more depth in the new issue of *Black Sun*, available for \$5 from the Barn).

*The anarchy I seek  
is in all these 'zines  
and none of them.*



# THE BARN

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### Books

#### NEWNEWNEWNEWNEW NEWNEW

**Globalize Liberation: How to Uproot the System and Build a Better World.** Edited by David Solnit. Almost 500 pages! City Lights. 2004. \$18. See the review on page 50.

**The Surre(gion)alist Manifesto and Other Writings.** Max Cafard. An Exquisite Corpse Book. 2003. 170 pages. \$12. See the review on page 50.

**Brunell, Jacinta with Irit Reinheimer Girls Will Be Boys Will Be Girls Will Be...Coloring Book .** \$6 (Comes with the CrimethInc. poster version, too!)

**Bill Ayers**  
*Fugitive Days* (2001) \$10

**James Bell**  
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**Alexander Berkman**  
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*Situationist International Anthology* (1982) \$15.00

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**Paul Garon**  
*The Devil's Son-in-Law: Peetie Wheatstraw* (2003) \$15.00 (w/CD)

**Derrick Jensen**  
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*Culture of Make Believe* (2002) \$25.00

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*Love & Politics* (Black & Red, 2001) \$5.00

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*Auroras Of the Zapatistas* (2001) \$14.00

**Fredy Perlman**  
*Against His-story, Against Leviathan* (Black & Red 1983) \$6.00

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*Sister of the Road: the Autobiography of Boxcar Bertha* (2002) \$15.00

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*Joe Hill: the IWW & the Making of a Revolutionary Workingclass Counterculture* (2002) \$18.00

**Starhawk**  
*Webs of Power* (2002) \$18.00

**Ron Sakolsky**  
*Seizing The Airwaves* AK Press \$13.00  
*Surrealist Subversions* (Autonomedia 2002) \$23.00

**Ron Sakolsky & James Koehnline**  
*Gone To Croatan: Origins of North American Dropout Culture* (Autonomedia) \$14

**Raul Vaneigem**  
*Collection of Desires* (no date) \$10.00

**William "Upski" Wimsatt**  
*Bomb The Suburbs* \$12.00

**David Watson**  
*Beyond Bookchin: Preface for a Future Social Ecology* (Autonomedia/Black & Red 1996) \$6.00  
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**NEW Oystercatcher #1** Edited by Ron Sakolsky. See the review on page 52.  
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# resistance calendar

(to add an event, please email [johnjef@bledsoe.net](mailto:johnjef@bledsoe.net))

**Sept 20-26—Idapalooza Fruit Jam - A Queer Music Festival** in the hills of Tennessee! [www.planetida.com](http://www.planetida.com) or [planetida@planetida.com](mailto:planetida@planetida.com) for info.

**Sept 24-26—Katuah Earth First! Regional Rendezvous**, Bark Camp Timber Sale, High Knob, Clinch River Watershed and Clinch Ranger District, Jefferson National Forest, south western Virginia. Contact: [johnjef@bledsoe.net](mailto:johnjef@bledsoe.net) or call Chris at 423-633-8483 for more info.

**Sept 24-26—Common Ground Country Fair**, Unity Maine. One of the premier organic country fairs! [mofga.org](http://mofga.org)

**Sept 24-26 —Renewing the Anarchist Tradition (RAT)** conference, Goddard College, Plainfield, Vt. Cosponsored by the Institute for Anarchist Studies and Institute for Social Ecology. Contact: Renewing the Anarchist Tradition, c/o P.O. Box 715 Conway, MA 01341 Cindy Milstein: [cbmilstein@yahoo.com](mailto:cbmilstein@yahoo.com), John Petrovato: [jpetrovato@hotmail.com](mailto:jpetrovato@hotmail.com)

**Oct 4-5—Annual IMF/World Bank Fall Meeting**, Washington, DC. Go there; raise hell.

**Oct 4-8 - Media emergenC - "Stop the NAB"** - alternative media gathering alongside the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) meeting, San Diego, Calif. As the corporate media makes their plans for control, we will be having skillshares, panels and forums to create democratic media networks and organizations. Contact: [info@mediaemergenc.org](mailto:info@mediaemergenc.org)

**Oct 8 - St. Louis Presidential Debate Protest and Convergence**, St. Louis, Mo. Washington University. Contact: [stlo8.org](http://stlo8.org), [info@stlo8.org](mailto:info@stlo8.org)

**Oct 9 - Women in Black Regional March** (Midwest and Great Lakes), noon, Ann Arbor, Mich., 5th & Liberty Sts., Contact [debnajor@yahoo.com](mailto:debnajor@yahoo.com). Women, men, children welcome. Please wear black.

**Oct 15-17 - Northwest Social Forum (NWSF)**, Seattle Center, Seattle, Wash. The NWSF will build relationships of mutual support among activists, organizations, and communities in the Northwest as we share our visions of a just and sustainable world and find collective solutions to the daunting social and environmental challenges of our time. [nwsocialforum.org](http://nwsocialforum.org)

**Oct 23—Third Annual Toronto Anarchist Bookfair**, 519 Church Street Community Centre. Workshops on Saturday 1 -5 pm and Sunday. To book a table or propose a workshop [anarchistbookfair@ziplip.com](mailto:anarchistbookfair@ziplip.com). *Look for the Fifth Estate table.*

**Oct 30—New Orleans Bookfair**, Barrister's Gallery. 1724 Oretha Castle Haley Blvd. 10am-6pm. [www.nolabookfair.com](http://www.nolabookfair.com) *Look for the Fifth Estate table.*

**Nov 12-14—Great Plains Anarchist Network (GPAN)** semi-annual conference, Kansas City, Missouri. [kansasanarchist.net/GPAN/gpan.htm](http://kansasanarchist.net/GPAN/gpan.htm)

**Nov 19-21—Converge on Fort Benning, Ga. to Close the School of the Assassins and to Speak Out for Justice for the People of the Americas!** School of the Americas Watch, PO Box 4566 Washington DC 20017; 202-234-3440 [info@soaw.org](mailto:info@soaw.org) *Look for the Fifth Estate table.*

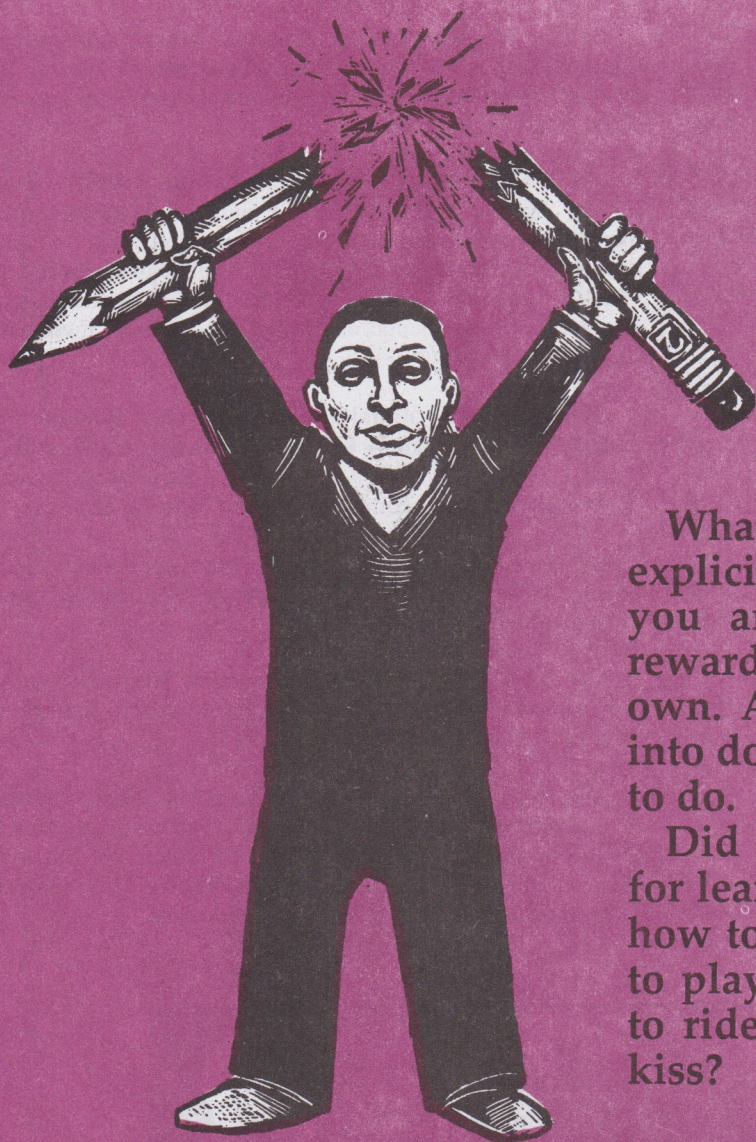


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What are grades? Grades are an explicit acknowledgement that what you are doing is not sufficiently rewarding for you to do it on your own. A grade is a stick to beat you into doing something you don't want to do.

Did anyone ever give you a grade for learning how to fish, for learning how to ride a bike, for learning how to play basketball, for learning how to ride a horse, for learning how to kiss?  
—Derrick Jensen

—Nicole Schulman  
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t most anarchists can remember the book that first introduced anarcho-anarchism, political anarchism, or other topics of lasting interest are hard to find amid the mass kid-lit that reinforces the mainstream values which are fed to children (and adults?). Here, then, we present a thematic guide to some of the best books we've left off your favorite list. This is meant to check with you that there are thousands of great books out there and our guide could easily be expanded in this issue if we'd let it. Our target age of target reader.

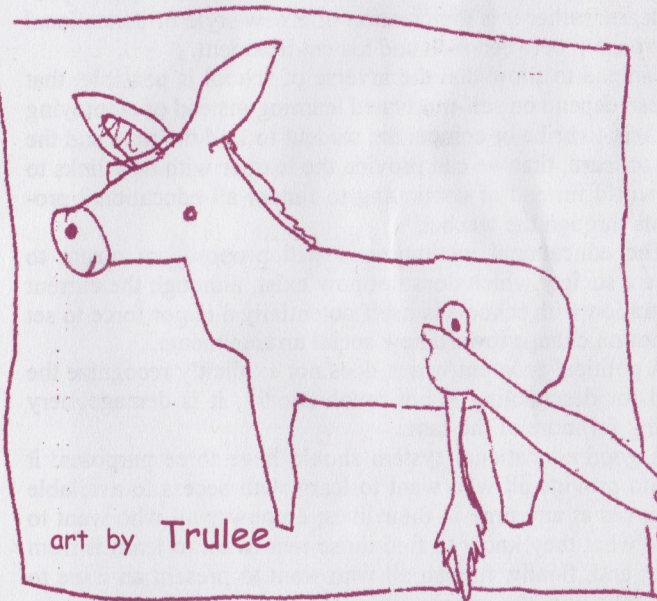
**Cowgirl.** illus. by Tony Ross. 2001. Leave the city. Throw away your books. Against the education system. Forget cooking and cleaning. What's so wrong with that?

**Moo : Cows That Type.** illus. by Schuster, 2000. With factoids and illustrations for farm animals worldwide before the animals start fighting. In Cronin's genius children's book, the animals fight back against the humans on strike.

**Ms. Millbrook Press, 1999.** While the book is to be explicitly political, it portrays two parents as free and a young girl must keep a sharp eye on their way through puddles, down

illus. by Jim McMullan. Joanna you haven't told your little one about garbage trucks and the people who clean you better pick up this book. Garbage dishes, your local garbage work is a stinky (and stinky) job that very hard to do.

# Learning Anarchy: Radical Books for Kids



**Yarbrough, Camille. Cornrows.** illus. by Carole Byard. Coward-McCann, Inc., 1979. This Coretta Scott King Award winner tells the story of hair in Africa and for African-Americans during slavery and to the present day through the stories of Mama and Great-grandmaw. Together, they teach Sister and Brother (a.k.a. MeToo) about the power and pride of cornrows... from Robeson to Malcolm, from Richard Wright to Langston Hughes, from Mary Bethune to Aretha.

**hooks, bell. Happy to be Nappy.** illus. by Chris Raschka. Hyperion Books for Children, 1999. This is hooks' first children's book, and it makes the reader shiver with excitement. Children will love this book not only for its words, but for Raschka's beautiful illustrations.

**de Haan, Linda and Stern Nijland. King and King.** Ten Speed Press, 2002. This is quite possibly the best pro-queer children's book that I have read to date. The story revolves around a prince who is forced by his mother to marry. After meeting princesses from all over the land, he finally finds his match... the brother of a visiting princess! This book is beautifully illustrated, and treats queer people as if we're normal.

**Silverstein, Shel. Lafcadio the Lion.** HarperCollins, 1963.

Lafcadio is a lion raised as a human. He learns to be a sharpshooter and eventually goes on a hunting expedition and encounters his lion kin. Forced to choose between the lions and the hunters, he puts down his gun and walks away to forge his own path.

**Lindgren, Astrid. Pippi Longstocking.** Viking Penguin, 1950. This indispensable inspiration for young anti-authoritarians features Pippi, age nine, who lives without adults and does whatever she likes because "in the whole wide world there was not a single police officer as strong as she."

**Dahl, Roald. Danny, the Champion of the World.** Knopf, 1975. A charming, less-well-known work by Dahl about a boy who lives with his father in a gypsy caravan.

**Pinkwater, D. Manus. Lizard Mus.** tessential Pinkwater style, Lizard Mus. sacred cows left and right. The book is embroiled in marvelous adventure and truth in order to think for himself.

**Bartoletti, Susan Campbell. K.** Mifflin, 1999. A history of labor from a century ago. Both an excellent introduction to labor and movements and a paean to the engagement by young people. Incredible well.

**Tolan, Stephanie S. Welcome to the Books.** 1996. The first in a trilogy about involuntarily committed to a youth center because of their inability to fit into society. It poignantly portrays, among many things, the power in the mental health system, the communication with the land, and the deva-

**Allende, Isabel. City of the Beasts.** A wonderfully written book for adolescents. It is a rapacity of those who want to destroy by exploiting its riches for profit, a corruption that interferes with their play. The book never preaches and the reader can see the problems and the problems they're confronted with. A 15 year old boy who unwillingly becomes a photographer grandmother on a

**Llewellyn, Grace. The Teenage L.** House, 1991. Very possibly the most this fiery guide encourages kids to drop out of school, and start making their own way and for all.

Some material we omitted (with teeth) includes: Dr. Seuss (our hero), James Loewen's *Th* and the now tragically-out-of-print *Radical Red*.

For more info on these and other books see Radym's online bibliography at [publishingradix.com/RadicalParent/](http://publishingradix.com/RadicalParent/).



# Radical Books for Kids

tarian values which are fed to y"?). Here, then, we present a ncratic guide to some of the best y, we've left off your favorite ve meant to check with you here are thousands of great and our guide could easily this issue if we'd let it. Our by age of target reader.

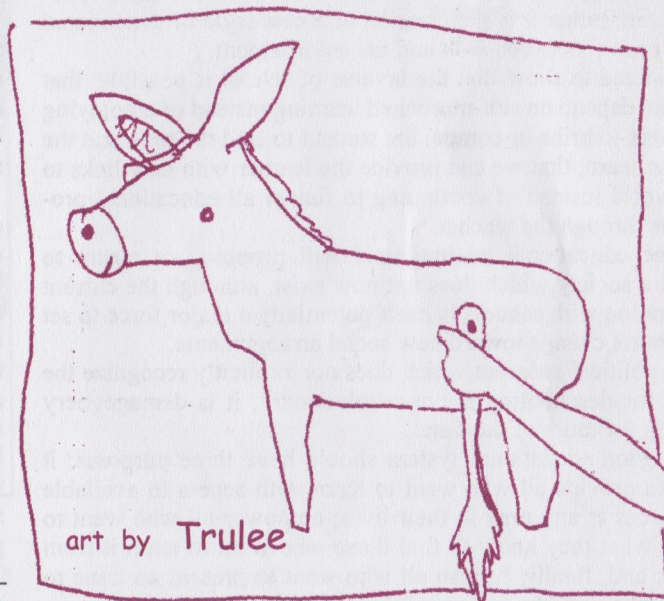
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**the ABCs of What a Girl Can Be.** knew the ABCs of what a girl can dea of the possibilities! This is a awings, and the wildest ideas of ey grow up (P is for Parachutist). y your children what they're not kick ass!



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**Baylor, Byrd. The Table Where Rich People Sit.** Illus. by Peter Parnall. Scribner's Sons, 1994. Like all of the beautifully-illustrated collaborations between Baylor and Parnall, this story teaches the value of the natural world. Unlike others, though, this one is explicit about the relative value of money and freedom, suggesting that money "shouldn't even be on a list of our kind of riches."

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**Gaiman, Neil. Coraline.** HarperTrophy, 2003. While Gaiman's charmingly scary children's book is not explicitly political, his protagonist's survival depends on her unwillingness to trust self-proclaimed authority figures and her trust in her own intuition and agenda.

**Bartoletti, Susan Campbell.** Mifflin, 1999. A history of labor c a century ago. Both an excellent and movements and a paean to engagement by young people. I well.

**Tolan, Stephanie S. Welcome Books,** 1996. The first in a trilogy involuntarily committed to a y because of their inability to fit into poignantly portrays, among man power in the mental health system nication with the land, and the dev

**Allende, Isabel. City of the Be** wonderfully written book for ad rapacity of those who want to de by exploiting its riches for profit, ulation that interferes with their p book never preaches and the reader ples and the problems they're con of a 15 year old boy who unwilling tric photographer grandmother on

**Llewellyn, Grace. The Teenage** House, 1991. Very possibly the n this fiery guide encourages kids to drop out of school, and start mak and for all.

Some material we omitted (v teeth) includes: Dr. Seuss (our l other hero!), James Loewen's 7 and the now tragically-out-of-p **Radical Red.**

For more info on these and c see Radym's online bibliography publish/asdavis/RadicalParents

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